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The Unchanging East

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TEMPLE OF JUPITER, BAALBEC.

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C. K. OGDEN

The Unchanging East

By

Robert Barr

Author of

'A Woman Intervenes,' 'In a Steamer Chair,'

etc.

With a Frontispiece

London

Chatto & Windus

1900

'Upon the whole, the book cannot displease, for it has no pretensions. The author neither says he is a geographer, nor an antiquarian, nor very learned in . . . history, . . . nor a naturalist, nor a fossilist. The manners of the people, and the face of the country, are all he attempts to describe, or seems to have thought of.'

BOSWELL'S *Life of Johnson.*

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SANTA BARBARA

To that

Captain Courageous

Mark Campbell

Master of the *Creole Prince*

to the Intrepid Doctor

H. W. Pritchard,

and to my Comrades in Prison

Edward Standing

and

H. W. Eastcott

this

Rambling Account of our Experiences

is Dedicated

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The Unchanging East

Chapter I

The Tarry, Trousers-hitching Seaport of Manchester—Delights of the Ship Canal—The Sad Fate of the Birmingham Man—The Peaceful and Much-libelled Bay of Biscay O—The Prince and the Pauper.

THE people of Manchester, heretofore an inland metropolis of England, have doubtless become accustomed, what with paying interest on the cost of the canal and enjoying the balmy breezes wafted from its surface, to living in a seaport town. But the outsider, unendowed with the privileges of Manchester citizenship, thinks it as odd to leave that city on an ocean voyage as it would be to depart in a ship from East Croydon or the top of the Malvern Hills. Yet, from the glimpse I got of it, Manchester is an ideal

spot to quit with the object of reaching the glorious, refulgent East. A thick autumn fog, saturated soot in suspension, enveloped the town. The drive from the station proved most unattractive—I should not care to liken it to a trip in Hades for fear of being accused of exaggeration, because Hades at least is warm, and I believe the atmosphere must be more clear than that of Manchester. Besides, through all ages, so much abuse has been cast upon the lower regions that I am not going to add to their trouble by invidious comparison. The water in the dock and canal head was of about the same colour and thickness as that of the air above it, and I admired the instinct of the cab-driver which led him to pull up without rushing from one element into the other. By feeling around in the fog I found the hull of the steamer *Creole Prince*, which was to be my home for two months or more. By a marvellous bit of good luck, a groping porter came upon my trunk, discovering it on the top of the cab, guided in that direction by the hoarse cries of the driver. I followed the advice of the captain who signalled on a memorable occasion, 'Don't give up the ship,' and, clinging to the steamer, vociferously instructing the invisible porter, we got the trunk aboard through

a series of incredible coincidences, and thus, by a singular streak of favourable fortune, I had the boon of my various belongings during the voyage.

When the steamship company sent me their printed rules and regulations, one item therein immediately attracted my attention. It was to the effect that no passenger was allowed to bring exhilarating beverages with him, so this reminded me that certain decoctions are grateful and comforting, as the advertisements say; besides, there is always a pleasure in breaking rules; so I at once bought four bottles of a fluid from Caledonia in case I should meet some personal friend *en route* who did not wear a blue ribbon. I had concealed these flasks among the clothing in my trunk, which may account for my anxiety to get the receptacle on board. I took it that the bottles would be free from observation, for there could be no rigid examination of one's effects, as a traveller's trunk is his castle, except at the New York Custom-house. The blow, however, fell in another direction. On the printed wine-list in the smoking-room I was horrified to find that the particular brand I had acquired was one shilling cheaper per bottle than the price I had paid in London. When you remember that the beverage

and myself were both Scotch, the peculiar discomfort of the situation may be imagined. Bang had gone eight saxpences with no prospect of return.

I almost always judge a strange ship by its smoking-room; but this compartment on the *Creole Prince* bore a striking resemblance in size and accoutrements to a rather big, rather long, third-class compartment on the South-Eastern Railway. This was a disappointment to a man brought up on sumptuous Atlantic liners. There was a door at each end, and two seats along each side, with a pair of round metal tables in between them. I nearly deserted the ship when I saw this inadequate fumigating chamber; but first impressions are never safe guides to follow, and before many days were past I came to look upon that smoking-room with an affection that did not seem possible at the beginning of the voyage.

Manchester operates its section of the Great Deep with all the enthusiasm of a novice. London is a veteran in maritime affairs, and quite often a ship comes to that port without causing any commotion in the west end of the Metropolis. London can send off a steamer without so much as a 'God bless you!' and allow her to wend her way to whatever

quarter of the globe she cares to point her prow. Not so Manchester; she provides one tug for the stem and another for the stern of every steamship that leaves her port, and thus the trio go cautiously along the canal, the spirit of Manchester hovering over the craft all the way down to the Mersey, murmuring, 'For Heaven's sake be careful!' The consequence is, there are no shipwrecks on the Manchester Canal. Passengers on a liner are not distressed by picking up emaciated, starving sailors in an open boat. No one is ever marooned on its banks, and mutinies rarely take place on its quiet waters, for the crews know that if they raise a fuss the captain will simply call in the police. What a lesson is this to the turbulent Atlantic Ocean! If navigation were conducted between England and America as circumspectly as it is along the Manchester Ship Canal, Clark Russell would have to abandon his work and occupy himself with the dialect novel.

It takes the best part of a day for a steamer to steal its way down the Manchester Ship Canal, and the trip has many points of difference from an ordinary ocean voyage. I know few other marine excursions where a man can sit in a deck-chair on an ocean liner and watch cyclists scorching past

him. You rarely see sights like this on the Pacific or Indian Ocean, or even on the Mediterranean Sea.

I got acquainted with one fellow-passenger on the way from the Manchester dock to the big lock which let us out into the Mersey near Liverpool. This man sat alone and disconsolate in his steamer chair, and, imagining he was, perhaps, sad at leaving Manchester, I thought it would cheer him up a bit if I pointed out to him that we could not possibly reach a more depressing spot than the city we had just abandoned. I found, however, that he was a Birmingham man, and quite ready to agree with everything I could say to the disadvantage of Manchester, his condition being merely one of sorrow in anticipation.

'We have no ship canal in Birmingham,' he said mournfully, 'and so we natives are little accustomed to the freaks of the raging main. I always dread the first night at sea, which is now rapidly approaching. Do you know if there is anything one can take for it?'

'Well,' I replied, 'I have heard it said that champagne is a good antidote, and, as I am always anxious to alleviate the distress of a fellow-passenger, I don't mind joining you, if you order a bottle.'

'Alas!' said the Birmingham man, 'the Customs officials have, it seems, sealed up the liquors on board this boat, and we cannot get at them until we are out at sea, when I fear it will be too late.'

His evil anticipation proved only too accurate. It was pitch dark when we were turned loose from the great lock which forms the mouth of the canal. The Birmingham man's berth was next to mine, and all that night I realized with painful distinctness what a bad time he was having. It did not seem to me that there was motion enough in the steamship to account for all the distress which had fallen on Birmingham. In fact, I congratulated myself because the room I occupied was so situated that I could not hear the throb of the engines. With the callousness of mankind, however (it being a case in which I could render no assistance), I went to sleep in spite of the fact that a fellow-creature so near me was in the most abject misery. Early next morning, upon going on deck, I was amazed to learn that we hadn't moved an inch. There had been a thick fog on the Mersey all night, which only cleared away a few minutes before I left my bunk. Anxious to impart this intelligence, I went down and rapped at the door of the Birmingham man's room.

'How are you feeling?' I inquired.

'Oh, miserable!' he answered. 'I always have an attack like this the first night at sea, but I shall be all right from now on.'

'It seemed to me reasonably calm last night,' I ventured.

'I have no doubt that it *was* calm,' replied the Birmingham man, 'but the slightest rocking, that would not be perceptible to another, quite upsets me.'

'Well,' said I, 'the only rock that this ship can be likened to is that of Gibraltar. We were anchored all last night, and this fact gives me a scientific interest in your case. It seems to me that an imaginative man prone to sea-sickness might have his first tussle with the malady the night before he leaves the shore, and then he could enjoy the voyage thoroughly from beginning to end.'

When the right hand of the distressed voyager began groping about the floor as if in search of some missile like a boot, I concluded it would be well to postpone inquiry regarding *mal de mer* and imagination until some future occasion.

The Bay of Biscay is a much-maligned sheet of water. Nearly all writers have represented it as being ill-tempered and turbulent, whereas, on the

contrary, it is as placid as a summer lake. I know what I am talking about, because I have been over it twice, and I intend to bring to the notice of the Geographical Society this serious libel against a blameless expanse of inoffensive water.

It was a lovely evening when we encountered the ship *Gabrielle* of Grenville, a port in France. As the reader may not be personally acquainted with this vessel, I venture to explain that she is a three-masted ship, carrying on her deck great heaps of shallow skiffs piled one on top of another, upside down, like so many pudding basins.

When we sighted the *Gabrielle* all sails were set, and she looked rather fine with such a spread of canvas reflecting the rays of the declining sun. But she was acting queerly, which is not to be wondered at, when it is remembered she is French. There was not much wind blowing—in fact, the chief characteristic of the Bay of Biscay is absence of wind—but the *Gabrielle*, taking advantage of the little breeze that was stirring, moved hither and thither in aimless fashion, as if she couldn't make up her mind which way to go, or as if there was no one at the helm, which we afterward found to be the case. Our captain, Mark Campbell, of the *Creole*

Prince, surmised that they had lost their reckoning. I do not understand much about navigation, neither do the French, it seems; but it would appear to me to be a simple thing to lock up their reckoning in a cupboard, or put it in the safe, where it might be had when wanted. I was informed, however, that it is quite a frequent occurrence for French ships to mislay their reckoning, and then find themselves in the position of the man in the song who 'dunno where 'e are.' By the orders of Captain Campbell a huge blackboard was hung out upon our starboard side with the latitude and the longitude written on it plainly in great white figures of chalk. This board was slung up in a conspicuous position at the end of the bridge, and as we passed the undecided ship, the attention of her officers was called to the figures thus displayed. No one on board was paying the slightest attention to the navigation of the *Gabrielle*. The whole crew were clustered like bees in a group at the side, and one (who was apparently the captain) had elevated himself above the rest, and was gesticulating violently on the mainmast's ladder of rope. They shouted *Oui, oui,* and *Très bien,* when we called attention to the second mate's amazing phonography on the blackboard. When they realized

the *Creole Prince* was about to pass calmly on its way, the officers and crew raised a simultaneous wail, and every man on board the *Gabrielle* began throwing his arms about as if he were an animated windmill. They were really howling for provisions, and we had flung to them a reckoning which, however interesting to the mathematician, satisfies neither the soul nor the stomach. They had asked for bread, and we had given them a stone in the shape of chalk marks. When Captain Campbell saw that they were actually in distress, he swung the great steamer slowly round, and came up with them again. We tried to intimate to the master of the *Gabrielle*, with the voice of a foghorn, that it might be well if somebody went to the wheel; but this advice was unheeded, the whole crew dancing about like the inmates of a lunatic asylum off for an excursion upon the sea—there and back for five shillings. Our captain then had to describe a very large circle to keep out of the way of the erratic *Gabrielle*, which was acting as absurdly as its crew. The French hilariously flung one of their little shallops on the sea, and bundled a couple of men over the side. It may be added that these sailors spoke French very much more fluently than any of

our own crew. They came alongside in a bubbling state of excitement. They had lost their reckoning, they said, but, what was worse, they had consumed all their vegetables. Scurvy had broken out; eight of the men were down with it. They had been fishing for a year off the banks of Newfoundland, and now hadn't the slightest idea where they were —whether in the Atlantic, the Pacific, the Indian Ocean, or Lake Windermere. They were amazed to learn they were just out of sight of the French coast, and evidently considered their position a wonderful piece of luck. Over the sides of the steamer were lowered to them great heaps of cabbages, several sacks of potatoes, an oblong case of lime-water, and then, to cap the climax, the captain ordered several pounds of jet-black tobacco to be given them. The two men howled with delight when the tobacco came upon them, as it were, from the sky. A huge giant of a bronzed sailor, who said he was from Brittany, seized a plug and seemed to bite off more than he could chew, but he somehow managed it; then flinging the remnant of the weed to the other sailor, it swiftly disappeared in his mouth. 'Tank you—tank you!' roared the Breton, which was all the English the two pos-

sessed between them. As they rowed back in their little butter-dish to the wandering ship, they shouted across the waters to their comrades the one word 'tabac,' and a great cheer went up from the decks of the *Gabrielle*. Yet these are the people who are raising the devil on the Newfoundland coast, and shouting 'Perfidious' across at England.

Chapter II

Portugal—Spain—Africa and that Sort of Thing—An Over-done Petition—Going up the Raging Canal to Tunis—The Anxiety we caused in the Harbour—Some Advice to the French regarding Navigation.

We spent one lovely day skirting the coast of Portugal, seeing charming little towns of dazzling white against the reddish ground of the landscape. Somewhat inland we had a fine view of the great convent of Mafra, 800 feet long from north to south, and 700 feet from east to west, with its 866 rooms, its 5,200 windows, and its sumptuous marble dome. I did not count the windows myself, nor did I visit the rooms; but there is no use in possessing an 'Encyclopædia Britannica' if you do not use it, and thus throw a glamour of learning over articles written about travel.

Next we came to Cintra, the Richmond Hill of

Lisbon, although Cintra is farther removed from the capital of Portugal than Richmond Hill is from the capital of England. The mountains of Cintra, running down to the coast, rise to the height of 3,000 feet. Again the encyclopædia! On the top is a castle, the summer residence of the Court of Portugal. We were all very anxious to see this palace, but a cloud clung to it persistently, and rendered it invisible. Since that time, however, Great Britain and Portugal have come to an amicable understanding, and doubtless Portugal has now arranged that no cloud shall hover in the vicinity of its palace when an English steamer is passing. There was a dim glimpse of Lisbon as we crossed the wide mouth of the Tagus, and the fishing-boats in the neighbourhood, with their lateen sails, had a distinctly Eastern appearance. We were evidently drawing farther and farther from Manchester. There flies along this coast a large semi-marine bird with a long beak. Alas! I cannot give its name, so it is impossible to look it up in the encyclopædia; but the Portuguese method of catching it is well worthy of attention from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to things in general. This bird lives on fish, and hovers high in the sky to keep an alert eye

on the ocean below, dropping on a good thing now and then, like the water-hawk it is. The Portuguese have a pleasant habit of nailing a fish to a two-inch plank, and setting the plank afloat with the fish uppermost. The ill-fated bird, flying a mile high, then offers a terrible example of the futility of taking an interest in only one thing at a time. The bird is well versed in piscatorial subjects, but is utterly ignorant of the timber trade, so when it drops, like a meteor through the air, down upon the fish, it gets the fish undoubtedly, but it dies instantly, as its beak pierces the floating timber underneath. This seems to show that doctors are quite correct when they say that food should not be bolted too hurriedly.

It was midnight when we passed Gibraltar. I regret to say, it has always been my luck to come upon this celebrated fortress in the darkness. Pretty nearly everybody else in the world has seen Gibraltar excepting myself. As we steamed along through the smooth black waters, the rock loomed up darkly ahead, and a wicked little quick-firing light at its foot guided the vessel. However, there is one satisfaction in viewing the rock at midnight, for as we passed through the Straits, and saw its huge dark bulk against the less dark sky, the resemblance to

one of Landseer's lions was most striking. The great beast lies there with its head facing the Atlantic, watching every craft that approaches the narrow channel. They tell me that in the school-books of Spain the British possession of Gibraltar is never admitted. Spain, it seems, allows this people to occupy Gibraltar temporarily, and as soon as Spain has need of the place, of course, she will take it. It is always pleasant to know that if you want a thing all you have to do is to go and get it. I think it shows a beautiful disposition on the part of Britain to spend so much money in running tunnels through the rock of Gibraltar and in building great docks, when it knows that at any moment Spain may come forward and say politely, 'I'll trouble you for that bit of rock, if you please.' Truly, as Mark Twain remarked, the British are mentioned in Scripture, where it says, 'The meek shall inherit the earth.' It is very fortunate for Great Britain that Spain has no particular use for Gibraltar at the present moment, because I am sure England would be loath to give it up, even though terrorized by Spain.

Next morning by daybreak the steamer was heading in for the town of Malaga, and a more beautiful

sight than that ancient city and its surroundings, with its background of high mountains, would be difficult to imagine. I was very much impressed with the magnificence of Malaga Cathedral, standing out massively above the town, with the level rays of the scarcely risen sun illuminating it, and was therefore correspondingly depressed when I read in he afore-mentioned encyclopædia, after my return, that the building is of no importance whatever, and that it shows how Spain has degenerated in architecture, her failure in this line being nearly as great as her collapse in war. The next largest structure in Malaga appears to be the bull-fighting building, but as the encyclopædia is silent about this Coliseum of red brick, I dare not venture an opinion regarding its architecture.

I toured all day along the southern coast of Spain, travelling by means of the roads which skirt the seashore, my conveyance being a binocular glass. It is a most charming method of touring, to sit in a deck-chair, and bring the road right up to the ship with the assistance of a pair of strong glasses. I passed many Spaniards on the road, mostly mounted on mules, the riders generally seated far astern on the animal, projecting their legs forward

at an angle of forty-five degrees. The Spaniards were invariably occupied in either smoking a cigarette or rolling one. I passed through several picturesque towns, mostly situated on hills or frowning promontories, sometimes clustered round an ancient Moorish castle, and often the steamer dragged my tardy opera-glass away from some spot in which I wished, like Lu, to linger longer. There are few signs of manufacture along the southern Spanish coast, the majority of the inhabitants, apparently, being engaged in riding mules to and fro. Here and there, near the swampy marshes where esparto grass flourishes, are long, low, white one-story buildings with tall chimneys, where the grass is prepared for the making of paper. Paper being the great source of Spanish currency, they do well to foster the growth of esparto. All along the coast are high mountains, scored in a great many places where the torrents have been in too great a hurry to get to the sea. One spot was pointed out to me as an example of the efficacy of prayer. For three years the inhabitants of the town had yearned for rain, but not a drop fell in all that time. The Spaniard rarely quenches his thirst with so elementary a liquid as water, and as for washing, he never thinks of it, so it

takes about three years of drought to make a Spaniard realize that the weather is abnormally dry. At last, however, the priests of the place called out the whole town and inaugurated a general prayer-meeting for rain. That night a storm burst with such force in the mountains that the torrent swept the village into the Mediterranean Sea. The survivors seemed to think that this was rather overdoing a good thing, and have ever since been careful not to be too pious.

It was evening when we left the coast of Europe, and the next afternoon we took on the coast of Africa. The principal need of the northern coast of Africa, as viewed from the steamer's deck, seems to be inhabitants. For miles and miles along that shore not a house or a human being was to be seen, and yet the land is said to be fertile and the climate a dream of delight. As France has practically annexed all this portion of the earth, it strikes an impartial observer that the sensible thing for that country to do would be to induce emigrants to settle upon these lands, instead of fooling round the world interfering with other people's possessions. But France has recently resolved to acquire the leather medal for stupidity, and has become a troublesome neighbour, while as a colonizer she is beneath contempt.

It was a lovely evening when we passed the ruins of ancient Carthage, and dropped anchor in the Bay of Tunis. The outlook from the steamer's deck is one worth going many miles to see. Far to the east a mountain range skirts the waters of the bay, while to the west is a picturesque rolling country, the near hills dotted with white villas on the site of ancient Carthage. Hannibal would now doubtless be shocked to learn that his great metropolis is merely a pleasant summer resort for the people of Tunis. Closer at hand lies the little seaport town of Goletta, once the harbour of Tunis, the Liverpool of the province; but here there is the Manchester Ship Canal business over again, and foreign steamers now give Goletta the go-by, proceeding direct to Tunis itself, the Manchester of the country. We were compelled to drop anchor because we had arrived outside at the hour during which two mail steamers are timed to leave Tunis, and the canal here differs from the one at Manchester in that two of a kind cannot pass each other on its murky waters. These mail-boats, being French, naturally never thought of leaving at the hour indicated. French trains and French steamers love to be late. If a French conveyance ever so far forgot itself as to

depart at the hour named on the time-table, it would not have a passenger on board, for everyone counts on the universal tardiness. Finally, we saw the two liners coming in procession, apparently overland, with all flags flying. They passed us just as darkness set in, two hours late, more or less, and then we were allowed to hoist our anchor and feel our way into the big ditch. The canal is something like twelve miles long, and is a straight, unlovely, dark trench, with banks of black mud. They have put electric lights all along this waterway, and so navigation is possible at night. The French Government compels any ship entering the harbour of Tunis to take on a pilot, no one but a Frenchman, of course, being allowed to act in that capacity. It might be supposed that the French Government would insist that the pilots should know something of their business, but this is too great a compliment to pay to French logic. The pilot we took aboard was a fat man, with charming manners, but little skill at navigation. He spoke no English, but after having the matter explained to him, he very quickly picked up the knowledge that one side of the ship was port, and the other starboard. The French are a very adaptable people.

Darkness had settled around us when the fat man took up his position in front of the pilot-house on the bridge. Captain Campbell, master of the *Creole Prince*, stood near the telegraph which communicated with the engine-room, and his genial face was overcast with a shadow of uneasiness. The ship was practically out of his charge, and the pilot now on board was responsible for its safety; nevertheless, the captain was on the alert, and all the passengers certainly felt a sense of relief that this was so, for the English-speaking person has little confidence in a foreign commander. The man at the wheel was a typical bullet-headed British sailor, with a voice like a foghorn; the way that he would sonorously roll out the words, 'Staaarrrbrd, sir!' might have given hints in elocution to the greatest actor living. It was evident that the actions of the French pilot did not commend themselves to the captain.

Not knowing the essential words 'port' and 'starboard,' the pilot stood there and waved his hand to right or left, saying nothing. This appeared to me a practical device, but it did not please the captain. It seems that if a pilot does not speak out so that others may hear, the substituted wave of the

hand is not evidence in a court of inquiry. 'Speak up,' said the captain. 'That side's starboard, and that side's port; say so. Give your command so that the wheelman can hear you.' After that we had extraordinary commands, as, 'Port!—je vous demande pardon, monsieur, je veux dire starboard.' The inevitable result was that before long we felt underfoot a slight shiver which told us the ship was aground. With a quick movement the captain sprang to the telegraph, and reversed the engine. Luckily the banks of the canal are like soft soap, and the steamer slipped away from Africa as if she were being launched on greased timber. I don't know what the captain said to the pilot; the conversation was in very low tones, and the communication was apparently delivered with extreme politeness, but, anyhow, the result was that the fat man surrendered the ship to its master and went down into the cabin, where a bottle of excellent brandy was awaiting him. He proved more expert at the brandy than at the piloting. Meanwhile, Captain Campbell, with a sigh of relief, navigated the steamer the length of the canal without a hitch.

The basin of Tunis which forms the terminus of

the canal is not of very great capacity, and a few ships crowd it uncomfortably. It was amazing how our own vessel had grown since we left Manchester. Alongside of the big Transatlantic liners at Liverpool, the *Creole Prince* was but an ordinary-sized steamer, but on the Mediterranean she seemed to have enlarged tremendously, and now overtopped anything we saw in those waters. Our respect for her good qualities had increased in proportion, and nowhere did she look so big as in that contracted harbour of Tunis. The white glare of arc lamps lit up the gloomy water of the harbour, and showed us the craft of differing variety among which we must take our place. To the left was a steam-dredge which had apparently just left off working. In front of us was a trim two-masted yacht with the tricolour flying aloft, and her guests on the smooth white deck under the awning enjoying after-dinner coffee. To the right was a small French cruiser of exquisite shape, everything neat and trim about her, bristling with cannon, and looking rather formidable with her ram-shaped bow. All was calm and peaceful when the towering sharp bow of the *Creole Prince* intruded itself, and claimed a place in this restricted basin. Having come in stem forward, and wishing to go

out stem forward when the time came for bidding farewell to Tunis, the steamer naturally had to be turned round. The space for performing this operation certainly looked to a landsman rather confined, and the bulk of the steamer appeared to have increased alarmingly since we left the Mediterranean. It looked as if we were trying to put too big a peg into too small a hole.

Edgar Saltus has somewhere remarked that the French fear nothing but danger, and we were to have an exemplification of this epigram. The helm was set at the proper angle, and, as the screw began churning the turbid water, the stern of the steamer swerved slowly round toward the barge with the dredging outfit on it. The watchman on the barge suddenly saw looming over him the black mountainous stern of our ship, and he gave himself up for lost. He uttered a cry resembling a scream, which roused the echoes of the harbour, and brought out half a dozen navvies from their supper in the house on the boat. All, raising simultaneous voices, implored our captain to spare them.

'How many feet have you to clear that barge, Mr. Stewart?' cried the captain from the bridge.

'Twenty feet, sir,' reported the second officer at

the stern, in stentorian voice. The huge hull, moving with the leisurely impressive dignity of a floating continent, cleared the animated lunatic asylum by the number of feet that Mr. Stewart had predicted, and a sudden calm fell upon the inhabitants of the barge.

Now we approached the yacht, and this craft was evidently not going to be outdone in excitement by a mere barge. The wild commotion that had just been seen on the dredge communicated itself to the vessel of pleasure. Each man sprang to his feet, chairs were overturned, and a panic ensued. The crew rushed here and there; everybody seemed to be in command. Half a dozen sailors got long slender poles, which they pointed at us over the bulwarks, giving the pretty yacht the appearance of a porcupine. Shrieks went up as though inevitable destruction was bearing down upon them. The commander wrung his hands, and appealed pathetically to our skipper as from one captain to another. We began to be alarmed ourselves at the seemingly inevitable international slaughter.

'How many feet have you to clear that yacht, Mr. Stewart?' rang out the voice of the captain.

'Thirty feet, sir,' answered the confident Stewart,

and sure enough we passed the yacht at that distance, and, as Oliver Wendell Holmes said, 'Silence, like a poultice, came to heal the blows of sound.' And thus the yacht was saved.

Someone leaned over the bulwarks of the cruiser, and yelled to our captain to mind what he was about; then, receiving no reply, and feeling we were, with true British perfidy, bent on the annihilation of the French fleet, the naval officer threw all self-control to the winds, flung his hands despairingly into the air, and piped the crew on deck. It is amazing how many men a small French war-vessel will hold. They came swarming up from every conceivable aperture, and the scene reminded me of nothing so much as of a densely inhabited ant-hill suddenly poked with a stick. The commotion on the cruiser was a hundred times greater than the turmoil on the barge or the yacht, because there were a hundred times more men on board than on either of the other craft. I feared some of them would jump overboard in their excitement. The men tumbled over each other in their hurry. The shrill wailing shriek of the boatswain's whistle sounded incessantly, but nobody seemed to pay the least attention to it. It was

all like a nightmare remembrance of a comic pirate opera.

Suddenly there was a sharp word of command from our captain, and the anchor plunged headlong with a glorious splash to the accompanying roar of the running chain. The thick rope from the stern, attached to a stout pillar ashore, whose dancing, bending slack had been coquettishly kissing the face of the waters, grew gradually taut, and the big ship came to rest. Captain Campbell, having rung off his engineer, now stood with one hand on the rail, and, taking off his cap with the other, said suavely to the commander of the ironclad:

'I think there is space between us, sir, for safety, but if you wish I can move a few feet farther away.'

The naval officer looked down at the intervening water for a few moments, then said good-naturedly, considering all the fuss there had been:

'*Très bien—très bien;* al-right—al-right, monsieur le capitaine.'

I have written this account of our entering the harbour at Tunis with some detail because I am fond of my friends the French, and would like to do them a service. The squirrel is a beautiful sprightly

animal, charming in all its movements, lithe, quick, and easily excited, but it does not take to the water like the stolid beaver. Each to his place: and thus are the uses of the universe well served. I doubt if Providence ever arranged for a Frenchman to take command of a ship. A strong fleet has never done France any good, and never will. Naval figures are most deceptive. A Frenchman figures up that, as he has a hundred ships and the other fellow has only fifty, he can smash up that fifty and have half a hundred left, coming out therefore the victor. This is arithmetically correct, and thus are the French nation deluded by mathematics; but mathematics have a nasty habit of going to pieces when the guns begin to shoot. The multiplication table does not seem able to stand the impact of a well-aimed shell. At the time France was meditating interference on behalf of her neighbour in the Spanish-American war, a French naval officer outlined to me with sublime confidence the programme of his country should such an intervention take place. It was admirably simple.

'We would go over,' he said, 'with our fleet and smash up the American fleet; then we would never allow them to build another ship. We would say to

them: "If you attempt to construct a battle-ship we will go over and smash it before it is ready to be launched." Then the Americans would be helpless so far as interference with European affairs is concerned.'

'But what would the American fleet be doing all this time?' I inquired.

'What could it do?' he replied in amazement at such a question. 'We have ten ships to their one.'

The fate of a French fleet in Santiago Harbour would have been exactly similar to that of the Spanish. The English and the Americans know how to handle their ships, and incidentally their guns, while the French do not. A French ironclad battered away at Crete for four hours, and only added to the hilarity of nations. The *Camperdown*, four miles away, fired four shots from a big gun, and the Cretan fort dissolved in dust. Of late years the French have been swaggering around the world a good deal, interfering with the preserves of peaceable nations, and my serious advice to them is to chuck it, otherwise they will run their fleet against somebody else's navy, and then it will be—'The boy, oh, where was he?' If the French are wise

they will turn their battle-ships into mercantile craft, and make some money in commerce. They should take to heart the beautiful lines of a Western poem, which run:

'Mother, may I go out to swim?' 'Yes, my darling daughter; Hang your clothes on a hickory limb, but don't go near the water.'

Chapter III

French Colonizing—The Tunis Arabs—An African Music-hall—A Notable Guide and his Sterling Qualities—Delights of Shopping in Tunis—Carthage a Disappointment.

THERE is a word, a very graphic word, which applies to French colonizing, and that word I make them a present of—it is the word 'perfidious'—a lovely word, and expressive. France jumped into Algeria, and swore by all the gods that she would not stay there, but she stayed just the same. She did likewise with Tunis; Madagascar also.

The first thing she does when she collars a foreign place is to lay out a boulevard and build a café-chantant. The moment you set foot on the quay at Tunis you think you are in a French provincial town. You find yourself in the Avenue de la Marine, with a tramcar line running along it: fare, ten centimes. There is a row of trees down the centre,

and electrical lights flare everywhere. Every second building is a café with little iron tables in regular rows outside, round which Frenchmen sit in groups drinking absinthe and cognac, and trying to imagine themselves in Paris. This avenue runs as straight as a line from the Custom-house to the fine Moorish gateway, whose name, Bab-el-Bahr, the French have conventionalized into Porte de France. Passing through the gateway, the change is startling. A few steps, and the West becomes the East. On one side of the gate is a huge café-chantant, brilliant with electricity; bustling and noisy waiters hustling about; *ici on parle Français;* the usual suggestive songs on the stage, and all that goes to make a café-chantant in Paris the delight of the Bank Holiday visitor. On the other side, narrow slits of thoroughfares, darkness, silence, stealthy movement of hooded, cloaked, masked, mysterious figures, and an undefinable sense of impending danger. The surroundings are of a sort among which a man might suddenly disappear and never come to the surface again. A cold shiver up the backbone seems to anticipate the sudden thrust of a hidden knife, and one goes hurriedly back through the gate again with a feeling of relief to be in the blaze of electricity once more.

The Tunisian Arab is a personage of great dignity, and even majesty of deportment. Man for man, the little French soldier is not to be compared with him. He is built on a generous scale, and is usually lighter in complexion than most of his French conquerors. The flowing robes he wears give free play to his well-proportioned limbs, and the proud swagger of him as he comes down the street is something beautiful to behold. Like the man who broke the bank, he walks along the Bois de Boulogne with an independent air that is inimitable. You would think he owned the earth, whereas he does not possess even his native portion of it. How, then, came this free and independent people to be under the dominion of an alien race? 'Don't swear, but shoot,' said the Rough Rider, when that high-class regiment fell into an ambush; and in this remark lies the key to empire. A man sitting in an arm-chair, working a Maxim, can make it very unpleasant for the neighbourhood. Personal bravery is of no effect when confronted with a machine gun. A long laminated shooting iron, built in the fashion of 1699, is useless against the magazine rifle of 200 years later. The Arabs swore by Mahomet, the inventor of their religion, and shot after the fashion

of Wartz, the inventor of gunpowder. So, naturally, they were thrashed. They were too far behind the times.

Then, again, they did not fall in with modern ideas, when collecting their revenue. Well into the present century they depended on piracy, instead of adopting its modern equivalent, the Custom-house, and thus they gave France an excuse for interfering.

A party of us chartered a guide, who spoke seven languages so badly that if he had added one or two more to his list he would have been incomprehensible. I could make little of his English, less of his French, and nothing at all of his Arabic, Phœnician, and Sanscrit. He seemed surprised that we did not care to go to the French café-chantant, and he assured us that the singing was better than at native entertainments, while the beer and the brandy were much preferable. However, we had not come to Africa to see a second-hand French ballet, when there was a Moorish show to be witnessed on its native heath. It detracted somewhat from the romance of the expedition, when he bundled us into an open tramcar, very similar to the summer public vehicles in any city in America, except that in Tunis two horses supplied the electricity. We

rode on through the dark narrow streets, and after a journey of half a mile or so descended in front of the place of entertainment. We were disgusted to find that the price of tickets was one franc each. Not that we objected to the payment of tenpence, but we would have preferred being asked for some unpronounceable Moorish coin whose value we did not understand.

International exhibitions ought to be suppressed. They take away all the delights of foreign travel. The show we were called upon to endure was in no wise different from what a visitor to the Paris Exposition might have seen; it wasn't even improper. It is true that the audience consisted largely of Arabs in their picturesque costume and headgear. Excellent coffee, too, was one penny a cup, which is cheaper than the prices ruling in Paris. The four or five girls who had armchairs in the centre of the back of the stage were not uncomely specimens of the human race. An energetic young man at the right-hand side put in his time at hard labour on an earthenware drum open at one end and covered with calf skin at the other, on which he pounded spasmodically with his eight fingers. He seemed to be working by the day rather than by the

job, and every now and then began drumming with extraordinary impetuosity; but lassitude soon overcame him, and, gradually tapering off, he finally ceased, and expended some time polishing the head of the drum by a circular motion upon his trousers. Then, after a rest, during which he gazed round upon us seated at the small tables, he suddenly recollected what he was paid for, and attacked his drum with renewed fury. The vocal music was of the same intermittent character. It was a sort of go-as-you-please concert. A girl would unexpectedly begin an aimless wail in a high key, and the rest would join in, the drummer beating time or not as best pleased him; then the girl seemed to reconsider the matter and ceased her vocal efforts, whereupon, by-and-by, inspiration seized another of the group, with a similar inconsequent result. Several of the male performers, with weird instruments, played when it suited them. All in all, there was a deplorable lack of cohesion in the performance. It was, indeed, a concert of Africa, but it reminded me of nothing so much as of the Concert of Europe when indulging a few years since in the Cretan symphony.

Next day, in charge of the same guide, we peram-

bulated the bazaars of Tunis. These consist of an inextricable maze of rabbit warrens, roofed with timber, and for the most part shrouded in twilight gloom. On each side of the arcaded alleys—alleys so narrow that not more than two or three can walk abreast in them—are little cubby-holes of shops where things are for sale. There is one advantage in dealing with the bazaars at Tunis, and that is, you are certain of the genuineness of the articles you purchase. All the cutlery and strange implements are made in Birmingham, and the cloths for the most part come from Manchester. Of course, you sometimes run across goods from Germany; but a man with reasonable care may be certain that he is bringing back with him articles of undoubted English Midland make. We saw them unpacking bales that had come by our own steamer the night before, and were naturally delighted to have an opportunity of encouraging the commerce of Manchester.

Gratitude here leads me to say a word or two in favour of our guide, and I cordially recommend him to any traveller who happens to touch at Tunis. I am sorry that I cannot remember his name, for he told us he had one, but you will have no difficulty in finding him. Most of the guides who apply for your

favour seem not to have washed themselves for the last three years. Very well; you pick out the guide who has not had a bath for five years, and that's our man. You can't miss him; he comes of a distinguished family. His grandfather was one of those estimable pirates who brought down on Tunis the resentment of united Europe; the grandson carries on the same business, but, like a civilized man, has some respect for the forms of law. We had him on the second day simply because we could not shake him off, short of killing him, and we didn't like to do that, being in a strange country. Finding it impossible to get rid of him, we took him along, for he explained to us that we belonged to him by right of discovery. In the bazaar, when we wanted to stop at some attractive shop, which probably would not pay him commission, he dragged us bodily away, crying, 'This man is a thief; avoid him.' I have no reason to doubt the truthfulness of his assertion, and naturally he wished to take us to the particular thieves who allowed him a percentage. The guide was exceedingly frank in speaking of his own protégés in trade. 'This man,' he would say airily, 'will treat you right. He is not honest exactly, but *I* am here,' whereupon he would smite his breast,

'and I will see that you are fairly dealt with.' The trader would smile, and spread out before us beautiful Manchester goods, which he informed us in a whisper were made by the ladies of the Sultan's harem, who, now that the French had come, were compelled to do something to wile away the time, their income having been seriously diminished on account of the invasion. By the grace of the Bey or the Dey, or whoever the nominal governor is, this particular trader was allowed to sell these priceless scarves for the insignificant figure of two pounds each. These scarves were no strangers to me; I had seen them in suburban London shops marked 11¾d. apiece, but when the trader mentioned two pounds our guide became furious. 'Thief and robber!' he exclaimed, 'did I not tell you that these men were under my protection? Two pounds! That is pirating. No; they shall pay no such money!' and snatching the scarf from the hand of the trader, he rapidly folded it in a piece of brown paper, and passed it on to us, saying with virtuous indignation in his tones: 'You will pay him no two pounds; that is what the French are charged. Give him one pound, and I will make him take it. I shall not have my people robbed.'

The shopkeeper protested with vociferous indignation that he would be ruined were such a transaction completed. My friend the doctor waved aside the wrapped parcel.

'No, no,' he cried; 'we cannot consent to rob this poor man of his just gains. We are on a friendly tour, not on a piratical expedition, and refuse to take advantage of your coercion of the shopkeeper. This scarf, made in a harem, is well worth five pounds, and we cannot consent to take it for less.'

The guide looked bewildered.

'Very well,' he said, with a sigh; 'he will take five pounds.'

'Alas!' said the doctor, 'we cannot afford so much, therefore the purchase must stand over till we return to Tunis richer men. Come away, and show us another street.'

The one thing that Tunis really manufactures is the brimless tasseled red Turkish cap, called tarbush or fez, which it makes for all the Moslem world. Tunis also does a little silk-weaving, but if Manchester were to become suddenly engrossed by the Ship Canal to the neglect of her looms, most of the shops from Tunis to Damascus would have to

put up their shutters, if they possess such a thing.

The guide lured us into hiring a carriage and driving out among the so-called ruins of Carthage. This involved a long journey over a flat, seemingly arid country on an exceedingly jolty bad road; and when you reach Carthage, Brighton is a museum of antiquities compared with it. Carthage is the most disappointing city in the ruin line that I ever visited, and I have seen some of the most famous ruined towns in America. I suppose Carthage actually did stand on that spot, but there are few evidences left of the fact outside of the guide-book.

Chapter IV

Malta—The Drama City of Valetta—Some Secrets of English Rule—A Marvellous Drummer—The Guide with Forty Languages.

In the evening we left Tunis and struck across the water for Malta. It was late in the afternoon of the next day when we skirted the island of Goza, which is practically Malta's next-door neighbour. The island of Goza seems to have been constructed somewhat as a Scotchman makes oatmeal porridge. When porridge comes to the boil, its surface is turbulent, with small active volcanoes, which become conical extinct craters as the mixture hardens. The island of Goza is covered with these solidified craters, and seems, therefore, to have risen by heaven's command out of the azure main by volcanic action. The island should by right be inhabited by Scotchmen, for it possesses a coin valued at one-third of

a farthing, and if, as the saying has it, the farthing was invented that Scotchmen might contribute to the cause of religion, then the islands of Goza and Malta should be three times more attractive to us Scotchmen as a place of residence than any other spot on earth.

Malta is the Clapham Junction of the Mediterranean Sea. As almost any train you enter near London will run you ultimately into Clapham Junction, so nearly every steamer on the Mediterranean Sea will land you at Malta if you give it time.

The entrance into the harbour at Valetta at night is most imposing. Valetta did not seem real, but looked like stage scenery got up for a naval display at Drury Lane Theatre. Once ashore, the illusion was far from being dispelled, and one could easily fancy himself to be walking amongst the characters of a drama. The smartly-uniformed naval officers might well have trod the boards of the Adelphi in London. Greeks, Italians, Arabs, and almost every other nationality were to be met in the street. Then, the costume of the women lends a picturesque detail to the general stagey effect. They wear a sort of lateen sail enveloper made of black cloth, and the arch of this over the head appears to be kept in

place by a wire like a pneumatic tyre. The end of this wire is held in the hand of the lady who wears the lateen enveloper, and by giving it a twist this way or that, she can set sail as pleases her, and cover her face or leave it exposed as the whim dictates. I was told that Napoleon and his troops treated the women of Malta so badly that they adopted this black costume on somewhat the same principle as the French themselves drape in mourning the statue groups of Alsace and Lorraine in the Place de la Concorde of Paris. I rather doubt the truth of this story, because Napoleon—honest man!—occupied himself in stealing, most of the time he was in Malta. He looted, from the church and elsewhere, everything of value he could lay his hands on, and as he was only six days altogether in Malta, it will be evident to his detractors that, after seeing the sights and engaging in industrious thievery, there was not much time left for anything else.

Talking about highway robbery, one cannot but admire the English, who stood by while someone else paid the expense of fortifying Malta, building up the town, and all that, and, when it was completed, calmly absorbed the result. Fools build fortresses; the English come and live in them. Malta certainly

possesses what is probably the finest harbour in the world, and I wish I owned it myself. The exasperating thing to other nations is that, when England does put the lion's paw on a place, the natives actually have the indecency to prefer English rule, and, like the man in the advertisement, will take no other. The Maltese revolted against the French, and lost 20,000 men in endeavouring to oust them. *Per contra*, they cried for English rule, and would not be happy till they got it. Now, why is this? It seems to me, if I were a Frenchman, or a German, or a Russian, or a Spaniard, that is one of the first things I should try to find out; so, in my rôle of genial friend of all these nationalities, I shall give them the result of my own investigations into the subject. It is because England is a wholesale robber, who never descends to petty larceny. She grabs the big offices for herself, and is content to let the natives fill all the smaller ones. If you gave England the earth—which it were superfluous to do, because she has got most of it—she would put one of her own governors at the head of every state, place her own generals and chief officials in command of the armies and the departments, and then she would divide the swag of the smaller offices with

those whom she would piously say Providence had set her to rule over. Now, when France, *par exemple*, jumps into somebody else's territory, pretending she is not going to stay, and then does stay, she takes everything to herself. Every official, from the Governor-General down to the most insignificant gendarme, must be a Frenchman. Every concession given must be bestowed upon Frenchmen; the foreigner or the native gets no chance. The Frenchman even keeps out foreign trade, and in many French ports will not allow a foreign vessel to enter. Now, this is terrible folly, for how are you going to take the breeks of a foreigner if you do not let him approach your gates? England throws her ports wide open to the world, saying, with a fine assumption of generosity: 'You see, I love all people so much that I bestow upon them the same privileges I claim for myself'—which is merely the modern equivalent of, 'Will you walk into my parlour?' —because, if you keep the outsider at arm's length, how are you to loot him? And thus is England wealthy. The restricted colonies of the French resemble the Western family who made a dollar a day by trading a jack-knife around among the members thereof, but although each seemed to make

a profit on the deal, there was no more money at night in the family than there had been in the morning. In trade you must loot or be looted, otherwise it is like going to a horse-race and not making a bet.

But what seems to me the chief element in the success of English rule is that she leaves small things alone. She goes in for essentials, and lets trivialities take care of themselves. For instance, if I were Governor of Malta, one of the very first things I should do would be to melt up about 6,000 of their church bells. But England is wiser; she stands the din, and leaves the bells alone. The Maltese actually enjoy the pandemonium. When a Maltese man wishes to indulge in a quiet, peaceful, after-dinner cigarette, he goes to a street-crossing where there are four churches within a few yards of each other, each church having from sixteen to thirty-two bells, all tuned differently, and all clashing at the same time, as if one church were trying to ding down the others.

> 'With a clang and clash and roar,
> What a horror they outpour
> On the bosom of the palpitating air!'

The English curse the bells, but never interfere with them. Malta is the modern successor of Avignon,

which kept its 300 bells incessantly a-swing in the time of the Popes, thus earning the title of l'Ile Sonnante, to which Malta should now fall heir.

I remember once in my oversea wanderings being landed upon the island of Jersey. Becoming interested in the history of the place, I searched round the town for a public library. Being told it was in the public square, and not finding it there, I asked a labouring man if he could tell me where the town library was.

'I don't wonder at you asking,' he said crossly, 'because what sensible man could be expected to understand such lingo as that up there?'

He pointed to a large building which I had not noticed, where, carved in the stone under the cornice, were the words 'Bibliothèque Publique.'

'Now,' continued the workman, who quite evidently had a grievance against the government of the island, 'will you tell me whether England owns this place or not?'

'There is no question about that,' I replied. 'She does.'

'Then, what does she mean by allowing words like them to be put up? If this place belongs to England, isn't the English language good enough

for her? If that's a public library, why not say so, instead of sticking up a foolish French rigmarole that doesn't mean nothing?'

Now, I think that, quite unconsciously and quite unappreciatively, the workman had touched on one of the secrets of success in English rule. England leaves to the people she governs 'the little things they care about,' and thus her sway is a success.

Malta has an opera-house which the islanders assert to be the handsomest structure of its kind in the world, and I am not sure but that they are right, although the Paris Opera-House takes a lot of beating, and the one at Vienna has points of merit. What struck me as one of the chief marks of architectural beauty about the Valetta Opera-House is that the dress-seats cost only three shillings, about one-third of the London price for similar seats. I saw the ruling class of Malta pour into the opera-house in great numbers, dress-coats less numerous perhaps than uniforms; but even a stall at such a price did not tempt me, for I was having a good deal of opera outside. There is a most enchanting café situated in a square in the centre of which stands a marble statue, and at this café various kinds of liquid refreshment can be obtained at the little tables

dotted about in front of it, which, together with the latest London paper taken in by the café, makes life worth living. Better is liberty than a stalled ox, or even an opera stall. Perhaps the cheapness of the opera stall is counterbalanced by the cheapness of the entertainment. I don't know what kind of companies give performances there.

An Englishman out West encountered a Red Indian who had quite evidently abandoned the war-path and the collection of scalps.

'What do you do?' asked the Englishman.

'Me preach,' replied the Indian.

'How much do you make at that?'

'Me sometimes make shilling, sometimes two shilling.'

'That's damned poor pay,' said the Englishman.

'It's damned poor preach,' replied the Indian.

The opera at Malta may be better than the preaching of the aborigine, but I don't think it could equal the free concert we had in the square from a regimental band. And then, again, tobacco is so cheap in Malta that a conscientious smoker does not care to occupy a stall at the opera, where smoking is not allowed, because it takes him all his time to consume

the money he sets aside for daily indulgence in the nicotine habit, anyhow.

The concert in the square was well worth listening to. The band did not play Wagner as a military organization in Germany would have done, but they gave us

> 'The tunes that mean so much to you alone,
> Common tunes that make you choke and blow your nose,
> Vulgar tunes that bring the laugh that brings the groan;"

music that might be played without raising a single emotion within a mile of one's own hearthstone, yet strains which bring him up with a round turn when he gets a few thousand miles away from home. Harmony has a habit of entwining itself with incidents and individuals, and it is the greatest of mental picture painters. Who does not know some particular tune whose chords, the moment heard, instantly place upon his mental stage the figures of a drama which has been acted in his past life?

But it was the drummer I was about to speak of when I mentioned the band. He was tall and thin as a lamp-post. I think he must have approached seven feet in height. He had strapped before him a drum that in one way was as thin as himself, but its circumference was something marvellous; it looked like a caricature in miniature of the Great

Wheel at Earl's Court. I never knew before that the British army lent itself to comicality, but a more amazing performance than that drummer gave us, I have rarely seen on any stage. During the first part of the concert he drummed with admirable reticence, giving us no hint of the gymnastics that were to follow. It was the ordinary Thursday performance at the Crystal Palace, to be ended by fireworks. The man was so thin, and his arms were so long, that I think each of them could have easily doubled around his body twice. Be that as it may, he took a few loops out of himself, and, giving a preliminary flourish of his hands, proceeded to show us what might be done with two sticks and a drum. All thought of the music was lost as we watched this man acting like a windmill in a hurricane, struck by lightning. He crossed his arms above his head and drummed; he struck at the helpless instrument from behind his back, first on one side, then on the other, finally on both sides at once. His motions, like the flicker of a whirling firebrand, dazzled the eye. He would fling his right arm around under his left arm and smite the drum that way, while his left arm was creeping around the back of his neck and hitting the other disc. Then he would suddenly re-

verse the performance, all the while keeping the most perfect time, the great full-moon face of the drum seeming the picture of amazement, never knowing where it was going to be hit next. I expected the man would tie himself up in a hard knot, and that the regiment would have to lay him out on his back in the square and unravel him when the performance was over. If this man had been sent up the Nile with his drum, the dervishes would never have stopped running from Omdurman to the Equator.

The principal sight of Malta is the Church of St. John, but people don't go there so much to see the edifice as to hear the description by the sacristan who takes you through. This man can describe the Church of St. John in forty-four languages and dialects. He understands only one of these languages, and repeats the others entirely by rote. If you give him a hint touching your nationality, and start him fairly at the door of the church and don't interrupt, he will bring you through every chapel, past all the tombs, round each altar, and give you a perfect description in your own language of the numerous saints; but if you break in upon him and say, 'I beg your pardon, but did you mention that Michael Angelo was the painter of the

large picture in the knights' hall?' then the man is lost, and he looks at you in the most reproachful way, as if you were deliberately taking an unfair advantage of him. He has his recitation punctuated by certain pillars and certain chapels. These form, as it were, the chapter-heads of his lecture, and if you take him to the door of any particular chapel he can begin his conversational explanation all right; but as to questioning him between any two points, you might as well ask the trapeze artist to pause between the bar he is swinging from and the one he is about to clutch. By judiciously interrupting this caretaker, you will have far more than the worth of the shilling he charges you by the time you get round the church.

Chapter V

Impressions of Alexandria—The Coinage and the Sphinx—Tommy's Recreation—The American Occupation—Cyprus.

ENGLAND is the modern possessor of the seven-league boots. She has acquired for herself stepping-stones over all the seven seas. She steps from her own island home to Gibraltar, Gibraltar to Malta, Malta to Alexandria, Alexandria to Aden, Aden to Ceylon, Ceylon to Singapore, Singapore to Hong Kong, Hong Kong to Vancouver, Vancouver to Newfoundland, and from Newfoundland back to England again. And this is merely one route; there are others.

We took our seven-league step from Malta to Alexandria, and came upon this ancient city in the early afternoon. The appearance of Alexandria reminded me of Buffalo, New York, as you approach it from Lake Erie. The first thing that strikes a stranger on entering Alexandria is the black police-

man in his white gloves. 'Said England unto Pharaoh, I must make a cop of you,' and marvellously has she done it. There is a quiet dignity about those Egyptian policemen that could not be excelled by the bobbies in Piccadilly. And the Egyptian 'copper' regulates the traffic at the crossings in Alexandria as if he had been educated at Mansion House corner. The next thing a stranger discovers in Alexandria is that he is in financial distress. I do not refer to the expensiveness of the country, though goodness knows it is a dear place to live in, but to the currency muddle. If Mr. Bryan, late Presidential candidate of the anti-gold party in the United States, would only come to Egypt, he would find there a silver question that might well stagger him. Now that the Soudan has been recaptured, I wish the Sirdar would turn his attention to the currency. All the time I was in Egypt, I had not the slightest idea what I was paying for anything. In the first place, as in Turkey, they have what they humorously call good money and bad money. In Egypt the coins are nominated 'tariff' and 'current,' but how they expect any sane man to distinguish between them, I am sure I don't know. I imagine they don't expect it, but playfully count on getting

rich through the impenetrableness of the mystery. The 'current' coins and the 'tariff' coins are of the same denomination, but 'tariff' coins are double the value of the same coin 'current.' As no coin has any intelligible mark upon it by which its value may be estimated, all a stranger knows is that he is being ruined, without seeing exactly how he is to prevent it. There is on the larger silver coins a cabalistic mark, which resembles an American spread-eagle having a fit. This hieroglyphic nightmare, they tell me, is Turkish, and means, 'God save the Sultan.' I think I could amend the phrase by substituting another word for 'save.' In order to help out the English-speaking interloper, some traders have issued a card which contains facsimiles of the different coins. As these reproductions are the actual size of the coins themselves, you may, by placing a piece of money over the card, and slipping it from one picture to another until it fits, find out, by reading in English the legend at the top, what the value of the coin is. It is interesting to see a party of tourists newly arrived shopping in Alexandria or Cairo. They cling despairingly to these cards, and ask the shopkeeper kindly to point out what particular coin he wants for the particular thing

they think of purchasing. If the coin selected seems too large, the tourists shake their heads and move on. The shopkeepers always exact 'tariff' coinage when you purchase an article—invariably, probably through inadvertence, giving you the change in 'currency;' and the unfortunate victim does not know the difference until he tries to palm off the 'currency' on some other shopkeeper at its face value. I suppose England has a big enough force in Egypt to reform this currency if she turned the whole army on to the problem; but she leaves it alone, perhaps wisely, because the Egyptians themselves, having got the key to the riddle, might resent interference in the conundrum at which they keep all nations guessing—a riddle never yet solved by the stranger.

I think that the Sphinx must have had something to do with the coinage. Perhaps the Sphinx was really the original mint, and the question it asked, which no one could answer, was, 'Guess the value of this coin?' It may be that the real reason the English leave the Egyptian currency alone is because they know their own pounds, shillings, and pence, and half-crowns and two-shilling pieces, are just as bewildering to the foreigner. Still, English currency

is not complicated by having two coins of the same name and size, one of which is half the value of the other. That's what adds pandemonium to the natural perplexities of the Egyptian financial nomenclature.

I found to my chagrin that I was a little late getting into Egypt, and regretted that I had not started sooner for that ancient country. When I learned that the Pyramids had been up 2,000 years before the first Pharaoh came to the throne, and that the first Pharaoh did his little share in muddling up the coinage some 6,000 years before the Christian era, I felt that any remark I had to make would be considered too antiquated for any up-to-date daily paper. It is discouraging to think how many jokes there are current to-day which originated about 8,000 years before Pharaoh tried his own practical jest on the Israelites—letting them go, and tying a string to them so that he could pull them back. Out West, when a man tells an ancient story, the assembled company are apt to break forth into song to this effect:

'In the days of old Rameses, are you on?
In the days of old Rameses, are you on?
In the days of old Rameses that story had paresis:
Are you on, are you on, are you on?'

You can't travel about in Egypt without coming upon some ancient pleasantry that has been re-created and made new in the American papers. For instance, the moment you land at Alexandria there is Pompey's Pillar. We are told it is not called after Pompey the Great, but after a certain Prefect of the same name in the time of Diocletian. This is quite evidently the origin of the saying that the plays were not written by Shakespeare, but by another man of the same name.

Cairo is the Chicago of the East. It is an upstart modern town, scarcely 1,000 years old. Some of the inhabitants tell you that their great-great-great-ancestors might have bought Cairo for a pair of sandals at one time, but neglected to do it. The English occupation does not seem to have added any ancient flavour to the place. When the soldiers get an afternoon off, they delight in hiring a two-horse carriage, which they pack with as many of themselves as it will hold, and drive at a great pace through the narrow, crooked streets of Old Cairo, scattering the foot-passengers about, and singing quite appropriately at the top of their voices, 'Knocked 'em in the Old Kent Road.'

An exceedingly modern narrow-gauge railway has

been constructed on the Nile side of the highway from Cairo to the Pyramids, and by-and-by they expect to have an elevator up the centre of the Great Pyramid to the top, with probably an aerial wire contrivance suspended from one summit to another. One thing, however, that never changes, and has been complained of by travellers since the time of Pharaoh—and doubtless, if we only knew it, was the cause of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, for they are the people who like to get value for their money—is the clamorous exactions of the Arabs around the foot of the Pyramids and the Sphinx. Pharaoh, powerful as he was, made no impression on these brigands, but Mark Twain did. Every tattered villain who has a camel to let, and wants you to ride on it at any price from sixpence to half a crown, cries to you: 'He Marky Twain—he Marky Twain; this camel he Marky Twain.' As there is no reason to doubt the veracity of these people, Mark Twain must have put in about six months riding round the Pyramids on every camel, old and young, in the desert.

I don't see that the English can leave Egypt for a long time to come, because there are many impositions to rectify. For instance, the ancient sheik,

who pretends to have a claim on the Pyramids, charges people two shillings for the right to ascend, whereas he ought to be made to pay that much at least to the visitor who is foolish enough to try the climb. What is needed at the base of the Pyramids is a Maxim gun in a state of eruption accurately aimed at these savage pirates. The Mahdi was an officer and a gentleman compared with them. Still, it is a great pleasure to visit the Pyramids, and lie down in the warm sand to look at them, allowing these tattered Arabian knights to waste their time and their breath endeavouring to get you to do things which you absolutely refuse to do—neither going up the Pyramids on the outside, nor down to the vaults in the inside.

Besides the English occupation in Egypt there is also the American occupation. The American occupation consists in mixing weird American drinks, and the American who thus occupies himself is one of the most deservedly popular men in Cairo. Officers who have sampled his decoctions tell me that he makes a whisky cocktail with a rim of crusted sugar round the glass that does much to mitigate the heat of the climate in Cairo.

One great advantage of going to Egypt is that a

man learns there is no such thing as Egyptian tobacco. They do not seem to grow tobacco in Egypt at all, but the factories make up tobacco which comes from Turkey into cigarettes which they call Egyptian, selling these to unsophisticated persons like myself for high prices. Thus you hear people say that they do not care for Turkish tobacco, but are fond of the Egyptian variety.

The only thing that is cheap in Egypt is sand, and curiously enough this is just what the Egyptian troops lacked up to the time of the English occupation, and thus the Egyptians were thrashed by whosoever took the trouble to send an expedition against them. All this is now changed, and the Gippies fight in a manner that would please Mulvaney himself. The Egyptian troops are a smart-looking body of men, and as you see a company of them swinging through the streets of Cairo with a mahogany-coloured band at their head, they have all the appearance of winners. As I stood aside to let them go by, the band was gaily playing the 'Washington Post March'—the oldest country in the world pounding away at the latest tune of the newest one; all of which goes to show, as everybody says, that the earth is getting smaller and smaller, for it

would be hard to imagine ancient Pharaoh marching toward the Red Sea to the strains of 'Yankee Doodle.'

We sailed north from Egypt to the island of Cyprus, and sighted it early in the morning. The *Creole Prince* had on board a British official and his family who were returning to Cyprus, and intended landing at Baffa, the Paphos of ancient history. But where a steamer intends to land a passenger, and where that passenger will actually land, is not necessarily the same thing in this region. Many of the islands of the Mediterranean have been carelessly constructed so far as harbours are concerned. I don't know that I am geologically accurate in stating that Malta was evidently the last island to be formed, because the excellence of its harbour accommodation shows that the mistakes made in the architecture of other islands taught a lesson in insular outline. At any rate, the towns on the southern coast of Cyprus have no harbours, so to speak, and a steamship must lie off to the open and transact its business by means of small boats. As the Mediterranean in this quarter is not always on its good behaviour, communication with the land is fraught with more interest to those who remain on board

than seems agreeable to the victims who seek the shore.

Arriving opposite the town where the official party hoped to disembark, it was soon evident that no one could get ashore that day unless he put on a diving-suit and walked along the bottom. So the steamer was compelled to skirt the coast for forty miles or more until it rounded a point which gave some shelter from the western wind, coming to anchor off Limasol. Here with great difficulty the party got into the rising and falling feluccas that had put off for them from the port. The heroine of the occasion was the two-year-old baby, who quite evidently thought this disembarking great fun got up for her special benefit—an opinion which was not shared by her parents.

For one long day we had a pleasing panorama of the island of Cyprus, with its lofty mountain range approaching at a certain point 7,000 feet in height, the low land by the shore looking for the most part uncultivated, houses or villages being few and far between. All in all, Cyprus does not appear to be a lucrative possession for England, the only great advantage being that cigarettes are passable and cheap, thus mitigating, in a measure,

the loneliness of an enforced residence on the island.

Leaving Larnaka at night, we were off Beyrout, the commercial capital of Syria, in the early morning. The squalid appearance so much in evidence in most Eastern cities is here invisible from the sea. Beyrout rises terrace above terrace from the Mediterranean, occupying an amphitheatre of hills somewhat after the fashion of Genoa. The houses are, for the most part, light in tint, with tiled roofs of the reddest colour, many of the buildings being of imposing size and admirable architecture, while behind the city the vivid green of the Lebanon mountains forms a most picturesque background, capped with snow of dazzling whiteness, a brilliant contrast of startling vividness. The picture is one well qualified to be a companion to that of Naples, the deep-blue margin of the Mediterranean being the foreground of each striking panorama. Even a nearer acquaintance does not entirely dissipate the charm that hangs over Beyrout.

Here, for the first time in our trip, we came under the authority of the genial Turk. He owns the town, although he has done nothing toward making the place what it is. The principal buildings

have foreign proprietors; the fine carriage-road to Damascus was constructed over the mountains by a French company; another French company built the new railway which now connects the two cities. Beyrout owes its waterworks, with an aqueduct nine miles long, to English capital. All that the Turk does is to stand at the gates and demand tribute—and he gets it, too. I am told that he used to be reasonably civil in his exactions, but since the war with Greece the Turk is badly afflicted with what is called in the West swelled head. He seems to think that he defeated England at the same time he overcame the Greeks, which belief has perhaps a spice of truth in it. Anyhow, he is now as arrogant as a successful novelist.

On landing at Beyrout there was a rigid examination of passports, and those of us who wished to travel in the interior of Syria were compelled to take out a Turkish document called a teskeri, which is covered with hieroglyphics on one side, while the other side is stamped and written on by the various officials through whose hands it has to pass, until it looks like a war-map gone crazy. Every time an official stamps the teskeri, and bestows his lightning-struck autograph upon it, there is a fee to be paid;

and if you go from one place to another without letting the officials know, you are fined, with a chance of getting into prison as well. At the point of departure your destination is written on the back of the document, and if you go anywhere else you suffer various pains and penalties. Turkey makes no allowance for a changeable-minded traveller.

Turkey seems unable to comprehend any distinction between an honest man and a rogue; in fact, the favour of the officials appears rather to incline toward the latter. They have an admiration for a man who endeavours to cheat them. Here is the pathetic story of an honest man and a rogue who left the steamship *Creole Prince* with the intention of going to Damascus together. Both of these individuals smoked cigarettes, and the honest man had bought a packet in Cairo which numbered one hundred pieces. The rogue, *per contra*, had purchased his tobacco in two-ounce packets in London before leaving, not knowing that in Malta the same kind of tobacco could be purchased for about half the price. The rogue allows himself two ounces of fine Virginia tobacco each day, which he makes up into cigarettes; he does not care for Turkish tobacco, and invariably declines to smoke it unless compelled to. Tobacco

in Turkey is villainously dear and villainously bad, all that is worth smoking being exported, and the Turk, having the traveller at his mercy within the Sultan's dominions, compels him to pay high prices and put up with an inferior class of goods. At a Turkish port it is not a question of paying duty and getting in what tobacco you prefer, for the Turk does not allow the importation of foreign tobacco in any circumstances whatever. The rogue, learning this, determined to smuggle sufficient Virginia tobacco to last him as far as Damascus and back, with a surplus to be used in that ancient city. The honest man took with him his hundred cigarettes, but had no intention of smuggling. When the two landed from a small boat on the quay at Beyrout, where the Custom-house is situated, it was raining heavily, and each was enveloped down to the heels in long waterproof coats, which assist in the concealing of tobacco when stowed away in an everyday suit.

Asked by the Turkish Customs official whether he had any tobacco or not, the honest man replied that he had a hundred cigarettes, whereupon he opened his handbag and produced the packet. The officer took the box of cigarettes, made a thorough search

of the honest man's effects, found nothing more, and so turned to the rogue.

'Have you any tobacco?' he asked.

'No,' replied the rogue; 'I don't smoke.'

'Any cigarettes or cigars?'

'Certainly not; I loathe tobacco.'

'Take off that overcoat.'

The waterproof being removed at this command, the Turk slowly walked round the man, looking over him as he did so, like a critical purchaser who had some intention of buying the article, and wanted to be sure he was not being cheated. Coming close in front of the knave, who had remained in one position like a marble statue, the Turk said sharply: 'Turn out this pocket,' indicating the one on the right-hand side of the Norfolk jacket. Immediate result: discovery of two two-ounce packets of Virginia tobacco. The Turk placed them one on top of the other on a table near by.

'Now this pocket,' he said: two two-ounce packets. The breast-pocket: one two-ounce packet.

'Unbutton your coat;' the inside pocket: two packets.

'This trousers pocket:' one packet.

'The other trousers pocket:' one packet.

'The hip-pocket:' three packets—this being considered an exceptionally safe receptacle.

'Would you like me to undress?' asked the victim.

'No,' replied the Turk; 'this will do, I think.'

On the table was a pound and a half of the finest Virginia, and what follower of the Prophet smoked it the knave does not know to this day, for that was the last he ever saw of this tobacco. Being caught thus red-handed, as it were, the rogue expected a fine of at least £100. Then the just and the unjust were haled into an inner room, in which sat an official evidently of higher rank than the expert individual who had so infallibly spotted every ounce of tobacco on the rascal's person. The superior official listened with frowning brow to the tale of flagrant dishonesty recited by his subordinate. After due meditation he gave his verdict—six mejedehs each, a mejedeh being a silver coin about the size of an American silver dollar, worth three shillings and fourpence.

'Allah have mercy on me, and the Prophet come to my rescue!' exclaimed the honest man, with quite pardonable indignation. 'Am I, who at once exhibited my hundred cigarettes, to be treated the

same as a scoundrel on whose person a concealed tobacco warehouse was discovered?'

'Precisely the same,' replied the official. 'You are not allowed to bring tobacco into this country.'

In fact, both officers seemed to look upon the honest person as a man of no class whatever, who had not given them a run for their money. So, to the amazement of the rogue, they handed him back two packets, the covers of which they broke, making this bestowal apparently as a token of admiration for the stalwart way in which he had lied, looking them straight in the eyes as he did so, contrary to the general belief regarding a forsworn person. Thinking that perhaps it were well to treat both alike, they offered the honest man a few dozen of his cigarettes. He sternly refused, whereupon the Turk shrugged his shoulders and put them back in the packet again.

This true tale has two sequels, both of which contain some element of humour. The honest man, angry at his treatment, which he denounced as uncivilized—as if anything civilized was to be expected of the Turk—refused to continue his journey, and said he would not set foot again in the Turkish Empire. The rogue pointed out earnestly that if

they returned to the *Creole Prince* they would be the laughing-stocks of the passengers for the rest of the voyage. The honest man, however, did not fear the ridicule of his fellows, having in his possession a clear conscience. Thus arguing, they returned together to the vessel. Luckily, all the passengers were ashore, and by this time the just anger of the honest man had somewhat cooled down. He now saw no reason for denying himself the giddy delights of Damascus merely because he had been treated unfairly by a set of Turkish officials. He therefore told the rogue that, as there was still time to get the train that evening, he was willing to proceed with the journey. Rejoiced at this, the rogue went down to his state-room and collected another dozen packets of tobacco from his ample store. Wearing knicker-bockers very baggy at the knees, the rogue put six packets in each trouser leg, and walked up and down before the mirror to see if they were notice-able. He turned all his pockets inside out, took ostentatiously in his hand the two broken packets that had been returned him by the Customs, and passed again the rigid investigator, who smiled genially when he saw the linings of the pockets dangling outwards. Thus did twenty-six ounces of

prime American tobacco, more excellent than anything they can grow in Turkey, enter that empire unespied by the watch-dog of the Customs, and the blue smoke thereof is probably still hovering about the mountains of Lebanon and over the ancient city of Damascus.

The second sequel came later. On returning to Beyrout the honest man made complaint regarding his treatment by the Customs official. This complaint, curiously enough, did not go to any department of the Government, but to a private company which owns the tobacco monopoly of Turkey. The head of this company, stationed in Beyrout, treated both rogue and honest man with a courtesy that was charming. He sent down to the wharf for the officer who had looted the two, and that individual came up with terror on his countenance. The trembling man made two statements, which were erroneous. First he said the honest man had threatened to strike him, whereas it was the rogue who kindly offered to throw him into the harbour. Then he alleged that the fine had been but four mejedehs each; so it at once became evident that, of the two pounds collected, thirteen shillings and fourpence had been stolen by someone connected with the

Customs. The tobacco and the cigarettes were alleged to have been forwarded to Damascus, and so they were not returned; but the four mejedehs each, which had come into the possession of the company, were most politely given back to the honest man and the rogue alike.

It was alleged by those who knew the ways of Turkish officials that both honest man and rogue would have some trouble in getting out of Beyrout, as the Customs collect both import and export duties. This, however, proved not to be the case. The Customs man, for whom trouble had been made, seemingly bore no resentment; and when the rogue finally bade farewell to Beyrout, this official smiled all over his face, and held out his hand in comradeship, as if he recognised that two scoundrels had met, and that, all in all, the Western rogue had somewhat the better of it.

The railway from Beyrout to Damascus, seventy miles long, zigzags up and then down the mountains of Lebanon. It does not take the mountain straight, as do most of the funicular railways in Switzerland, but runs angleways up the side until it comes to a level spot; then the train stands there until the engine is shunted to the other end of the train,

when it cog-wheels itself up to another level, and repeats the process. The top of the pass is 5,000 feet above the sea-level. There are two trains a day, one in the morning and one at night. My companion and myself, with our dragoman, took the night train, as we desired to put in a long day at Baalbec, which is, with the well-known exception of Mark Twain's horse, the finest ruin in Syria. Equipped with the voluminous ignorance which I always use when travelling, I had supposed on leaving London that I was approaching a mild and balmy summer climate. I had read all my life of sunstrokes and thirst in the Desert, but never heard of anybody being frozen to death. As no one took interest enough in me to pass on a little information, I went up to Baalbec arrayed in summer garments. It was all right when we left Beyrout, for we were then in the land of palms, and our train at the beginning passed through groves of orange-trees laden with their golden fruit. A warm rain was falling when we drew out of the station at Beyrout in the pitch darkness, but before we were many hours *en route* white patches were blown against the window-panes, and the suddenly increasing cold showed us we were approaching the Arctic regions.

Very soon we had risen above the region of soft snow, and it now beat against the window-panes like hail, while the crunch of the wheels outside the car reminded me of the noise a train makes in Northern Canada in the depth of winter. A man learns much by travel, and we were now finding out that the mountains of Lebanon toward their summits are no place for summer clothing. We were just able to crawl stiffly out of our carriage at Muallakah, the summit station, where at midnight we met the westward-coming train from Damascus.

Chapter VI

Baalbec, the Superb—Origin of the City—The Founding of the First Water Company—History made on the Spot—Temples galore—The Historian of Baalbec—Some Interesting Literary Extracts—The Tower of Babel Question settled at last.

BITTERLY did I regret during the trip that Baalbec had not been wiped off the face of the earth while the earthquakes were about it. Snowing had ceased —it was too cold for snow—but a wild blizzard from the north cavorted across the plains and enjoyed itself riotously, much more than we were doing, in spite of the fact that we were wrapped up in blankets and quilts kindly loaned us by the Arab proprietor of the hotel at El Muallakah. We fastened down the curtains of the carriage, and expected every now and then to go off over the plains like a balloon, so fierce was the storm. And yet they must have some

decent weather in that locality, because the principal industry seemed to be grape-growing. There were no fences or hedges round the fields, and the grape-vines were trained along the ground, the big bunches of white fruit nestling in the sand. And thus it comes about at the hotels where grapes are served that you see a man who knows the country hold the bunch of grapes above a bowl, pouring water over them to remove some at least of the Syrian soil from the berry. Little straw huts dotted the landscape, in which shivered the vineyard watchers, armed with long guns. These huts were not big enough for a man to stand upright in, and so the watchers reclined on their stomachs, and shivered so much that their aim must have been slightly unsteady, although we did not test the accuracy of their firing by attempting to take in the grapes from the cold. As we approached the ancient city the weather moderated, the sun came out, and life was worth living again. Baalbec lies in a sort of cup, or, rather, a saucer, surrounded by high mountains. The broad valley, in the centre of which the ruins are situated, has a reddish surface, caused by oxide of iron in the soil. The origin of Baalbec, like that of Jeames, is wrapped in mystery. It stands 3,800

feet above the sea says the guide-book, and 4,500 says the encyclopædia; but, judging by the weather, it was 10,000 feet high the day we were there.

It is almost impossible to do justice to the ruins of Baalbec. The relative merits of the ancient Greek and Roman as compared with the modern Turk are here brought into startling contrast—the magnificent ruins on the one hand, and the squalor of the Turkish village of Baalbec on the other. The Government exacts three shillings and fourpence from everyone who enters the ruins, but it does absolutely nothing to preserve them. A miniature river of clear, sparkling water runs winding through the place, turning here and there a small mill for the grinding of corn. Insignificant as the stream is, if it had not been there Baalbec would never have been built.

As there are extant no definite records regarding Baalbec in the early ages, this leaves a man a fair chance of airing his own opinions on the subject without running the risk of being contradicted. At this spot there met and joined two great caravan routes, one coming from Damascus, in the south, and the other from Palmyra, to the east. From this point westward the two caravan routes were

identical until the Mediterranean Sea was reached at Tripoli. Whether going east or west, the great necessity for a caravan was water. The caravans from Damascus would not be so badly off for the fluid, because they came to this place through ravines, down which streams flowed from the mountains; but the caravans from Palmyra could meet no water-supply from the time they left that city until they came within sound of Ras el Ain, for so Baalbec's stream is named. Then, again, the caravans from Palmyra must have been more numerous than those from Damascus, because Palmyra gathered to herself all the caravans from Bagdad, Babylon, Nineveh, and other important centres of the farther east. Palmyra herself had grown rich by supplying water, and this city was undoubtedly the model on which our present water companies were formed. The water from the springs of the oasis on which Palmyra stood was farmed out at exorbitant prices to thirsty caravans, and any man who had a share in the springs of Palmyra was certain to become one of the millionaires of the town. Palmyra honoured men who successfully brought great caravans to that city across the desert from the East, and erected statues to them along the

main thoroughfare, which was doubtless the result of gratitude to these caravan captains for bringing victims to the office of the water-works. It must, then, have occurred to some Palmyrian, who perhaps had a share in the water monopoly and wished to have more, to head off the caravans somewhere else, and thus secure another chance of attracting tribute from them. So I imagine a true citizen of Palmyra mounting his camel, going west until he came to Ras el Ain, and there staking out a claim for himself. I have some hope that the first caravan which came along massacred this individual, took what water it needed free, and passed on joyously to the westward; but the history of monopoly shows us that the mere execution of one or two individuals who pretend to own the earth and the water thereon does not in the least retard the growth of the monopoly, and doubtless if one man could not acquire for himself exclusive possession of this river, a limited liability company succeeded where he failed, and thus began the town of Baalbec.

Possibly as the years went on the caravan leaders came to regard this exaction as belonging to the natural order of things, and the company probably put up a tank and looked on itself as a public bene-

factor. Having exploited the water market for all that it was worth, the new town of Baalbec apparently grew and flourished. The water bailiffs, becoming rich, doubtless built fine houses, and ultimately palaces, and then the yearning for some other method of depleting the stranger in addition to the water-supply most naturally arose in their minds. I should surmise that first an era of temple-building began. These water-works people must have seen that nothing is so universal as religion, and perhaps it struck somebody that it would not be a bad idea to make Baalbec a sort of cosmopolitan city of worship. The magnificent Temple of the Sun, standing next door to an almost equally magnificent Temple of Jupiter, shows that the people of Baalbec had no bigoted notions with regard to any particular kind of religion, and as Baalbec stood ready to furnish water to all comers, it may have had equal willingness to cater for all opinions on the subject of religion. This idea is strengthened in my mind by the fact that the Druses were the most powerful tribe in the neighbourhood of Baalbec, as, indeed, they are to-day. The Druses are a tribe who make no attempt to proselytize anybody else, and they do not possess ambitions toward martyrdom, for they

instruct their people to conform to any religion amongst which they may find themselves, each, however, remaining true in his heart to his own faith. Now, a water monopolist would probably have no religion of his own, and being free also from the trammels of conscience, it may have occurred to him that it wouldn't be a rash speculation to erect temples in Baalbec for every kind of belief then extant, and make the city, as it were, a free-for-all place of worship, no sect interfering with any other sect, and each sect having its own palatial temple. As the habit of the day in all other cities was persecution, the strongest religious body in the place oppressing all the rest, this go-as-you-please idea in Baalbec must have become very popular, and must have attracted rich citizens from various parts of the world, who thereupon erected mansions and palaces in the suburbs of Baalbec, and as the climate is delightful for the greater part of the year, as water was plentiful, and the whole district around fertile, Baalbec became undoubtedly one of the most charming cities in the world for residential purposes. I intend to offer this contribution toward historical accuracy to the next edition of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' but in case the publishers of that work

should not use it I now give public expression to my theory. There is this advantage—these statements cannot be successfully contradicted by even the most profound of Eastern scholars.

We entered into Baalbec through tunnels extending the whole length of the town—arched tunnels built of huge stones finished off in some parts, and left rough in others. There are two tunnels, one under each side of the city, running parallel, with a connecting tunnel between, making the whole form one gigantic letter H. These subterranean thoroughfares are thirty feet high and thirty-two feet wide. Archæologists have been puzzled to know their use, some guessing that they were dungeons for the confinement of prisoners; others, that they were barracks for the Roman soldiers. They were, however, no puzzle to me. I recognised them at once as the underground railway system of Baalbec. Anyone who has ever stood on the platform at Gower Street Station in London will find no difficulty in coming to a conclusion regarding the use of these subterranean passage-ways. Doubtless the loops at each end have been destroyed by frequent earthquakes, but when these were in place no deep-thinking man could hesitate for a moment in

pronouncing this to be the inner circle railway of Baalbec.

Of the magnificent Temple of the Sun, six or seven superb columns remain standing, and this in spite of the fact that the Arabs chopped away the stone at the base of each column, as a woodman cuts down a tree, in order to make bullets of the lead that joined the stones. Each column is seventy-five feet high, and is composed of three stones; the height, including cornice with entablature, is eighty-nine feet; therefore these six columns tower above the ruined city, and form a striking landmark for a long time before the traveller reaches Baalbec. The Temple of Jupiter did not fare so badly as the Temple of the Sun. Its walls are still intact, and it is considered the most perfect ruin to be found in Syria. It was surrounded by forty-six columns, some of them fluted, and nine of these now remain. It is perhaps too late to expose the imposture of the priests, but for ways that are dark and tricks that are vain they were certainly peculiar. The statue of Jupiter in the temple was consulted by the people as an oracle, and gave answers to their questions. Ruin has now laid bare the secret passages by which the priests crept in the darkness under the floor of

the temple, up through a trap-door, and into the statue of Jupiter—which may account for the replies of this piece of sculpture.

The largest building in Baalbec is the Pantheon, the temple of all the gods. It is about 400 feet square, and its walls are still standing practically as originally built. From the number of niches and recesses in the walls, it seems to have been enriched with many statues, and doubtless great finds of valuable marble would result if the Turks gave permission to excavate the courts of this temple. I believe, however, that the German Emperor has overcome the Sultan's reluctance in this matter, and that a German society is now digging up the courts of Baalbec. If there is anything valuable underneath, I should say that the Germans are reasonably sure to find it.

One cannot but admire the masonry of Baalbec. Mortar is nowhere used, but lead bolts join the stones together, which lead has mostly been extracted by the Arabs. So perfect is the workmanship that, even where the largest monoliths are concerned, the joints are so perfectly fitted that it is impossible to insert the blade of a penknife between any two of the stones.

No account of Baalbec would be complete which did not contain some mention of its local historian. Michael M. Alouf was our guide through the ruins. He is a young man who speaks English excellently, and has evidently received a good education. His father is the custodian of the ruins, to whom the Turkish mejedehs must be paid. Michael has written a history of Baalbec which can be had in English, French, or German, and the author has received compliments for his work from the Société de Géographie of France, the American Geographical Society, and other learned bodies. No English-speaking person should be without this little book. The author told me that a new edition was about to be published, but, as some inaccuracies had crept into the issue then on sale, he was receiving assistance in the preparation of the new edition from a native Englishman. I cannot help thinking this is a pity, because the volume now in my possession is something too precious to be parted with. We like the signatures of authors on their books, and anyone who secures a copy of the earlier impression will get the autograph of its writer, because the book has been set up in Beyrout by people who evidently knew nothing of the English language, and so Mr.

Alouf has with his own hand made various corrections, which, while perhaps adding to the clarity of the language, certainly detract from its humour. For instance, on page 26, the unrevised version, speaking of Elijah, said, 'This confounded prophet came to Baalbec,' but the amended edition tells us that 'This prophet came to Baalbec and confounded the priests of Baal,' which, while more complimentary to the prophet, certainly lacks the spice of the sentence as first printed. But no words of mine will do so much to promote the reader's appreciation of this book as extracts from it. In concluding his Preface, Mr. Alouf says: 'For fear that my history would annoy the readers, I have tried to make it as short as possible, but at the same time interesting. But, at any rate, the reader, who knows my goodwill, will excuse, I hope, my young age of twenty years, and the difficulties which I had to overcome in writing in a language, though very dear to us, yet a foreign one.'

Describing the route to the cedars of Lebanon, he says: 'At 5 minutes to the north of that village flows an abundant, delicious fountain, that refreshes the thirsty traveller who was so much troubled by the long way. The road which he

crossed after leaving Ainata is hard acclivity in form of a zigzag; every now and then, however, he meets with pleasant and picturesque objects that repair and indemnify his forces.'

After the traveller has used up some more of his forces in climbing a mountain, Mr. Alouf thus graphically describes the view: 'From that high place to the east you can discover Baalbec in its charming position, like a queen sitting honourably and quietly on its beautiful and green throne.' And on reaching the top, where a glimpse of the Mediterranean is to be had, he says: 'The scenery is delightful and enchanting. The sea from far looks like a vast beautiful prairie, and Besherri, with the mountains that surround it from all directions, made the view so nice.'

He thus describes the cedars themselves: 'Its wood is very strong, and has a deal of tar; its smell is fragrant, and neither can the moth gnaw it, nor dampness injure it. . . . The Bible boasts in its lumber, elevation, grandeur, and utility for the masts, building, and statues.' He touches lightly on the idolatry in the Temple of Venus as 'the "pleasure" which caused among the inhabitants much superstition and effemination.'

Returning again to the cedars of Lebanon, Mr. Alouf says: 'David and Solomen used it, the first for his palace, and the other for the Temple of Jerusalem. Zerubbable used it also in building the second temple. The historian Josephus says that Herod the Great used it in building the temple he erected. Even the cross of our Saviour is thought to have been of this wood; a fact that shows us enough its honour. Others say also that the roof of the church of Resurrection in Jerusalem, and that of the house of the Holy Virgin have of the cedar wood. When Solomon intended to build a temple to the Lord, Hiram, king of Tyre, made many rafts of the cedar wood, which he attached to the vessel and sent them to the king to Jerusalem. There were then many forests of it in Lebanon, and Solomon, availing himself of that, sent 80,000 men to bring for him cedar wood from there. But now there are only five forests, the greatest and most beautiful of which is found near Becheri, of which we are speaking now.

'It contains more than 400 trees, of which 12 are the greatest, and the oldest, while all the others are much smaller.

'Mr. Graham, the famous traveller, measured the

extent of the shade which the branches of every one of 21 trees cast forward, and concluded that their diameters are from 22 to 40 feet. The circumference of the largest is 20 feet. People visit them from all parts of the world, from Asia as well as from Europe and America. There they contemplate things which are worthy to rejoice the sight and charm the eye. The Christians of the East consider this forest as a holy place, and that is why they erected there a small church.

'The traveller is always anxious to know new ways and other paths to return to Baalbeck than those by which he has come. He has first to pass the valley of Ainata by the west side; after an hour he gets to Yammouni that has its nices position near a little lake. Many fountain flow froem there abundantly. The inhabitants say that Yammouni has forty fountains as an emblem of the forty martyrs who were killed in that village, as they suppose. The great fountain is to the west side of the village; it flows from the height of a mountain, and forms a magnificent water-fall, and flows down raoring to a far distance, and turns many mill-stones. In Autumn the its water, lake loses one quarter of but in Summer and Spring it overflows to its enormous bulk.'

Mr. Alouf tells some stories in his volume which are exceedingly interesting. Here is one about the ambassador's pigeons, which struck me as very ingenious, so much so that I stole it, and then sold the purloined goods to magazines in America and England. Thus do unscrupulous so-called authors make one hand wash the other. Like all plagiarists, I carefully concealed the fact that I got the germ of the story from Michael M. Alouf; but now, when it is too late for him to get out an injunction against me, I cheerfully acknowledge the source of my alleged inspiration. Here, then, is the real story of the pigeons:

'Soon Ismail prince of Baalbek intended to have possession of Damascus in 1,238; he began then to have his preparations for war. Damascus had then Omar son of king Ayoub the young nephew of Ismail as a governor; Ayoub who was then at Naboulus, knew secretly his uncle's intention, he then sent to Baalbek a phisicien, called Saadeddin in whom he had full confidence with some pigeons, which were then used to convey the news, to let him know all what he could discover. Ismail knew the motives that brought this phisicien to come and visit him, he invited him and shewed him much friendship

and kindness, then stole from him the pigeons of Naboulus, and put other pigeons instead of them. The phisicen did not perceive the fraud thinking that these pigeons were the same ones he brought with him, he wrote to Ayoub and told him that "your uncle Ismail is gathering his army and getting ready to walk against Damascus, thereupon he tied the letter to one of its doves and let it fly away it flew for some time in the sky and came back to the city with the letters which so to speak Ismail intercepted." Then Ismail wrote false letters by the name of the phisicien in which he told Ayoub that "your uncle Ismail is gathering his army to come to your help and fight against your enemies, he then sent it with the pigeons of Naboulus." So Ismaïl could conveniently finish all his preparations, and walk with Shirkoh, prince of Homs against Damascus, they attacked it, and besieged its fortress, which Omar son of Ayoub was defending. When Ayoub heard of this news, he felt sorry for the loss of time and soon walked with his army towards Damascus to help his son, but on his way he heard that Damascus was taken, and his son was defeated so he went back home.'

Baalbec has had to suffer much from invasions,

and also from earthquakes and even floods, which seems strange in such a dry country. Mr. Alouf graphically gives an account of one of these inundations, which must have been similar to the disaster which, I have taken for granted, caused the building of the Tower of Babel, as set forth at the end of this chapter.

'In May 10th 1,318, an impeteous flood coming from the east overwhelmed the city and destroyed it. It was then divided into two torrents; the first one coming from the east wind rushed down against the ramparts which in vain tried to pull down, but passed them on; the other one that was stronger, coming from the north-east concentrated fully on a part of the ramparts, made a hole of about 30 yds, its depth was then 4 yds, it carried away a tower of 12 yards square sound and safe to a distance of 400 yards, as some historiens say. The water filled the city; 1,500 houses were ruined including the great mosque, 131 shops, 44 orchards, 13 schools, 17 furnaces, 4 aqueducts and 11 mills. The number of people who died in that calamity was 194.

'Tamelan (Timour-lank) the Tartar, after his coming to Aleppo with his infernal terror went to Damascus passing by Baalbek in 1,401. It was in

vain that its inhabitants presented themselves before him begging to spare their city; but Tamerlan listened to no one he sent there his army, plundered it completely. In 1,516 when the ottoman sultan Selim I took possession of Syria, Baalbek at that time was subdued to him also.'

Mr. Ruskin wrote learnedly about the stones of Venice, but they are as nothing in size to the stones of Baalbec. The great stone in the quarry just outside the city is seventy-two feet long, fourteen feet wide, and fifteen feet high. A man has little idea of the weight of this block until he tries to lift it. I doubt if we have any modern tackle that would stand the strain, and it would take the combined strength of 40,000 men to move the block with such tackle if we had it. In the ancient walls of the city are several other stones only slightly smaller than this one in the quarry. The question that naturally presents itself to the investigating mind on viewing this monolith is, How did the ancients transport it from quarry to wall? The solution generally preferred by scientists is that an inclined plane and stone rollers were used. If this were the case, a strong causeway of stone, or some such hard and durable material, must have extended from the

quarry to the city, otherwise the roller would have sunk in the earth; but of this causeway no trace remains, therefore it seems unlikely that it was ever built, for, with the more delicate tracery of the pillars practically perfect after all these years, the remains of a stoutly built roadway would surely have been discoverable to-day. My own theory is that those great builders knew much more about science than we do. For many centuries we have merely been rediscovering what China knew thousands of years ago. We are able to-day to reverse the electrical current, making it positive or negative at will, causing it to attract or repel. It seems plausible, then, that the ancients knew how to reverse the attraction of gravitation. No other force that we know of pulls the one way all the time. It is more than likely that the foreman of a quarry, instead of attempting to hitch a hundred thousand men to the block, would say to one of his workers:

'Johnny, the boys are shouting for more brick at the walls; just take this stone down to them, will you?'

Then Johnny would pull the lever that reversed the current of gravitation as far as that particular stone was concerned, and would then push it gently

down to the wall of the city, asking the masons where they would have it placed.

My next task is to settle the Tower of Babel question, and I am as willing to throw light upon that subject as upon any of the foregoing. There is a legend to the effect that Baalbec takes its name from Babel, and that here was built the celebrated tower intended to reach to heaven. Then there is the additional fact that confusion of language still exists in the village of Baalbec. The great stones are supposed to have been the foundation of this tower, which seems to indicate that its builders contemplated a reasonably high and solid structure. There is, of course, no inhabitant of Baalbec now old enough to remember the building of the celebrated tower; still, the opinions of the present residents on the subject are at least as valuable as those of outsiders, and this is a synopsis of them. Baalbec, as I have said, lies at the bottom of a cup. The waters which supply the city find their exit from this cup through a gorge in the mountains. It is quite possible that one of the numerous earthquakes, which make life exciting in this region, flung down rocks into this gorge and dammed up the stream. The chances are, then, that Baalbec woke up one

morning and discovered itself surrounded by water, and as the inhabitants had of course no boats within the city, and probably little wood of any sort, they may have found it impossible to escape. Thus, before the accumulation of water swept away the barriers in the mountains, the whole plain in which Baalbec is situated may have become a vast lake of fresh water, and probably few of the citizens escaped drowning. Now, as the people of the present day in Baalbec truly say, those who built such a magnificent city were no fools, even though they may not have foreseen a flood. If they wanted to reach heaven (alleged my informant), they would naturally have begun their Tower of Babel, not at the bottom of the valley, but on the top of the nearest high mountain, which would have saved them some thousands of feet of masonry. It was therefore suggested that the Tower of Babel was built alongside the city to such a height that if a similar flood overtook Baalbec, the inhabitants could fly for safety to the top until the waters subsided. This seems to me a reasonable and sensible deduction, and thus I leave it.

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Chapter VII

The Wonderful Druse Tribe—The Druse's Contempt for the Turk—Story of a Hitherto Unrecorded Expedition—Ordering a Fresh Relay of Turks for Slaughtering Purposes—The Druse Religion—A Novel that saved a Man's Life.

SURROUNDING Baalbec, but principally to the west of it, the highlands are inhabited by a remarkable tribe called the Druses. The chances are that these people are relatives of ours; but be that as it may, the Druses have a strong liking for the British. Their origin is in doubt; they themselves think that they came originally from China, and it is rather remarkable that they should know anything about China, for usually the people of Syria are densely ignorant, especially so far as geography is concerned. In appearance they have little in common with the modern Chinese. The Druses are big, fair-haired, stalwart men, with a complexion much whiter than

that of the Arab or Turk, and they have an independent swing in their walk which differs much from the attitude of the average Eastern person. It is thought by some students of antiquity that the Druses are really descended from the English or the French. It is asserted that a body of Crusaders became detached from the main army, defended themselves as well as they could, but were finally driven to the mountains. There, being tired of fruitless war, they settled down, and took to themselves spouses from the hill tribes which they joined, somewhat after the manner of the shipwrecked Spanish Armada sailors on the coast of Ireland. The Druses are a most admirable people, extremely hospitable, ready to share their last crust with any stranger who happens along, invariably refusing money for the services they may render a traveller, and always fond of a joke. They are about the only people with any comprehension of humour in Syria. Living in the territory of the Turk, they pay neither tribute nor respect to him, and the Turk, up to date, has been quite unable to bring them under the yoke of the empire. I had my first sight of the Druses in Beyrout, and took them for important officials from the way they swaggered round

the town, and from the fact that each had a gun slung over his shoulder—for the Turks allow no one but themselves to carry arms. They pretend not to see the armed Druses, and the latter do not seem particularly to care whether they attract the attention of the Turks or not. If any foreigner enters Turkey with even the harmless necessary revolver, it is taken from him and confiscated. A man we met in Damascus succeeded in getting his revolver and a number of cartridges through, but that was by taking out the inner works of a kodak and placing in the box his pistol surrounded by the ammunition. The Turks are so accustomed to kodaks that they allowed him to pass without question. The Druses, however, do not ask the permission of the Turks to carry their guns, and the Turks keep mum.

About 65,000 Druses inhabit the mountains of Lebanon, and some 10,000 more are found in the Hauran district beyond Damascus. There, too, is located the tribe of Maronites, a large community which numbers, all told, something like 135,000. Like the Druses, the Maronites occupy the country on both sides of Damascus, largely inhabiting the mountains of Lebanon. The Turks promised the Druses the lands of the Maronites, and promised the

Maronites the lands of the Druses. They also stirred up ancient enmities between the two peoples, fearing that they would unite and sweep Turkish rule from Syria. The Maronites being largely in excess of the Druses in numbers, the Turks succeeded in persuading them to disarm, and then joined the Druses in attacking them. Naturally, the disarmed people suffered heavily. Peace was patched up between the two tribes in the early sixties, but various writers inform us that the ancient enmity between the Druses and the Maronites has continued. I did not find this to be the case. Our dragoman was a Maronite, and he certainly stood high in the esteem of the Druses. By what I could learn from the latter, they are now 'on to' the game of the Turk, and the Sultan has moved his thimble-rigging performances farther west, and is playing his little dodge with great success on those simpletons Russia, England, France, and Italy.

Much happens in the Lebanon mountains that does not get into the papers. Some years ago the Turks sent an expedition from Beyrout against the Druses, who were becoming too independent to be bearable. The Turkish battalion disappeared into the valleys of the Lebanon, and for some days there

was considerable anxiety concerning them. But at last there appeared at Beyrout a tattered Druse, badly cut up, who said his people had been defeated after a terrible battle, and that the two enemies now occupied positions opposing each other, neither daring to attack. Seeing that the Druses could not withstand the might of the Turkish Empire, he had deserted his comrades, and had come to swear allegiance to the Turk. As a matter of good faith, knowing all the paths of the mountains, he had brought a message from the leader of the Turkish expedition, who asked the commander at Beyrout to send him reinforcements instantly, which this Druse would guide to the place where they were most needed. Another band of soldiers was at once despatched under the guidance of the traitorous Druse. He led them into the mazes of the mountains and up a high valley, where he triumphantly pointed out to them the Turkish flag waving over a large body of men in Turkish uniform. Suddenly the guiding Druse disappeared into the wilderness, and from all around fire blazed forth on the unfortunate Turks, who thus too late realized that they had been trapped. The Druses had taken in the first expedition and wiped them off the face of the

earth, not a man escaping, and being still unsatisfied, now that their fighting blood was up, had calmly ordered on another regiment, which they also decimated, just as a hungry man calls for a second helping at a restaurant. After this double victory the Druses thought of going down to Beyrout itself to make things lively and interesting in that town, and it was not fear of the forces they would meet that hindered them, but the fact that so many foreigners lived at Beyrout, some of whom would be sure to get hurt, and thus bring on outside intervention, as had been the case when Napoleon III. sent 10,000 French soldiers to keep the peace in Lebanon about forty years ago. The Druses, however, forwarded a polite letter to the Turkish commander at Beyrout, requesting him to send larger men next time, as the Turkish uniforms they had captured were of too small a size to be of much use as ready-made clothing for the Druse warriors. Thus it happens that, although the rich people of Beyrout go up to the mountains of Lebanon in the summer for their health, the Turkish officers have since then come to the conclusion that the mountains are not a suitable health-resort for their soldiers.

A missionary who has spent many years among the Druses gave me some interesting particulars about their religion and habits. He says they are the most difficult people to live amongst in an evangelical way that he has ever had any experience of. Like the inebriate with the champagne, you don't get any forrader with them. They will agree cordially with everything a missionary says; they will join with him in prayer, and do everything he wishes, but they stick to their own religion just the same. The faithful are enjoined to conform to whatever religion is dominant around them, but to remain true in their hearts to their own. Thus, they will worship with equal complacency in a Mohammedan mosque or a Christian church. They never pray, as they look upon prayer as an impertinence toward the Almighty. They believe in one passionless God, who is all-wise, and therefore needs no advice from this earth. They will allow Mohammedan or Christian to enter their churches, but when a Mohammedan visits them they cease their own form of worship and begin reading the Koran. When a Christian comes, they read the Bible. They do not practise polygamy, but treat women with a respect similar to that in vogue among civilized

nations, teaching them to read and write, which every Druse woman is able to do, thus forming a somewhat striking contrast to their Moslem neighbours. They have seven commandments, the first and greatest of which inculcates absolute truth, but that is only between Druse and Druse, for they may lie as much as they like to the outsider; it is not counted against them. They make no attempt to proselytize other people, for they know it would be useless, as the gates of heaven were finally closed something like 800 years ago. They believe in one indivisible God, but they have had ten Christs—the last being Hakim, whose full name is El Hakim Aboo 'Alee Mansoor, who held the gates of heaven open for thirty-six years, during which time all mankind had a chance of salvation. The gates were at last closed in the year 1020. It certainly seems rather illogical of the Druses to shut out everybody born since that time from Paradise except themselves. They say that no more Christs will appear to save sinners, but that when Hakim finally returns it will be to conquer the world. Hakim, by the way, who was Caliph of Egypt, seems to have been the worst and most tyrannical ruler that ever reigned even in that much-misgoverned country.

He became so unbearable at last that his sister arranged for his assassination, which duly came off, to the satisfaction of all the people of Egypt and the surrounding countries.

Although the Druses are a warm-hearted, hospitable, free-handed people, yet, once their suspicions are aroused, they are as cruel as fate, and in war they are relentless, as has been shown more than once. The missionary of whom I speak was one day jogging up to his station in the mountains on a donkey. He lived in Beyrout, and visited the Druses as occasion might require. A friendly member of the tribe met him in a secluded spot, and told him, with fear and trembling, that the Druses had received information which pointed to his being a spy in the employment of the Turkish Government. As the Druses did not wish to cause him unnecessary anxiety, or hurt his feelings in the least, they had determined to give him no warning of his fate, but to cut his throat quietly that night while he slept. The missionary had not gone too far into the Druse country to retreat had he been so minded, but as a matter of fact he determined to go on in any case, as he had announced that he would visit them for three days. He knew that, when he got particulars of their sus-

picions against him, he could easily disprove the charge of treachery toward them; but he knew also that the Druses could execute first and investigate afterward, which knowledge was somewhat discomforting. He met his parishioners near the large tent in which his services were held, and there was nothing in their demeanour to show that they intended to assassinate him, although he noticed that the women seemed rather sorrowful. He greeted them cordially, and was as cordially greeted by them in return, but he gave them no indication of his acquaintance with their murderous intentions toward him. That evening, after holding service, the Druses, men and women, gathered around the central fire in the big tent, and the missionary told them of a story he had lately been reading, which was Robert Louis Stevenson's 'Treasure Island.' Having roused their curiosity regarding it, they pressed him to relate some of the incidents. He recited from memory, translating the absorbing novel from the original for the Druses. The missionary was staking his life on the device which saved the newly-wedded wife of the Caliph, and gave to the world the Arabian Nights' Entertainments. A couple of breathless hours passed, during which the Druses listened to the

recital with absorbed interest. At last the missionary paused, yawned, and said he was tired from his long ride up the mountain, and would go on with the tale next night. He slept peacefully till daylight, his throat uncut. The following night, and the one after that again, he worked off on those interested Druses the well-known serial formula of 'To be continued in our next.' He left them with the story still unfinished, promising them to complete it when he returned again from Beyrout. From that city he sent them conclusive proof that he was not the traitor they suspected him of being, showing them that he had no more communication with the Turks than was necessary in arranging the right of domicile. And so to this day he passes among this mountain tribe scatheless, giving them now and then, by word of mouth, free translations of interesting English literature.

Chapter VIII

Damascus in the Early Morning—Bazaars and Workshops—An Arabian Greatcoat—Terrors of Carriage-driving—House Interiors—A Game of Horsemanship.

RETURNING to Muallakah from Baalbec, we took the midnight train for Damascus, and arrived at the outskirts of that celebrated city on a dark, cold morning, somewhere about five o'clock. The ride in the train was not as uncomfortable as our former trip had been, for the obliging landlord at Muallakah bestowed on us a pair of mattresses and some blankets, in which we wrapped ourselves, and made a sort of sleeping-car of our compartment. We tumbled sleepily out of the train at Damascus, right into the arms of the authorities. I thought at first we were arrested for something, but it appeared they only wished to examine our teskeries, and while one official held a lantern aloft, the other scrutinized those

interesting documents. The lantern was then turned upon our faces and persons, and we were looked over very carefully to see if we corresponded with the bill of lading. They seemed to have their doubts about the advisability of letting us pass, but after an animated conversation with our dragoman they finally, with apparent reluctance, allowed us to go free. Day was breaking, chill and gray, as we got out on the sandy thoroughfare, and there being no carriages at the station, we set out to walk to our hotel. Passing a tremendous barracks on the one hand and a mosque on the other, we reached the bank of a clear stream, and skirted its edge until we came to a bridge, at the other end of which stood our tavern. Here we met, racing for the station with true Eastern dilatoriness, three or four carriages which would reach there half an hour after the train had come in. The hotel was barred like a fortress. Two great doors studded with iron closed the arched gateway, and after some delay a smaller door in one of the big leaves was unbolted and opened, and we were allowed to enter with suspicion evidently still clinging to us. The wide passage led to an open courtyard, in the centre of which played a fountain. We were taken up a winding-stair and along a

gallery overhanging the courtyard, then into what was veritably a marble palace. The floor and the wainscoting were of white marble veined with a black bordering. We were shown into nice large airy rooms, with beds protected by mosquito-netting. Each room had windows opening after the French fashion, and nice little balconies which overhung the road and faced the river. The first view from this balcony reminded one of a French town, the river being canalized and straight as a ditch, with stone embankments on each side of it; and the immediate buildings were as modern as any in Paris. But beyond arose the sky-piercing columns of the minarets, with their conical roofs and circular balconies near the top. As the sun appeared the blind Moedhdhin came out on this lofty gallery, and sang in high tones the call to prayer, strolling around and around the minaret as he did so. Blind men are usually chosen for this exalted office, that they may not overlook the courts and housetops from their elevated situation. Against the deep blue sky in the distance rose the mountains of Lebanon, their tops covered with snow; and thus at length we realized we were not in Paris, in spite of the modern marble hotel, the iron bridge, and the embankments of

stone which confined the waters of the running stream.

Keeping along down the stream from our hotel, we came to a broad square, and thence passed out of all modernity into the real ancient renowned metropolis of Damascus, probably the oldest city in the world. The narrow streets were thronged with a variegated jostling crowd, and here and there, towering above them, a stately camel plodded its slow way along, careless on whose toes it trod. On each side of the way, in bazaars entirely open to the street, busy people were making or selling things, or both. There was no deception, everything was done in plain sight; and as you could buy most things fresh from the hands of the manufacturers, you had no troublesome doubts about their genuineness: everything as advertised; any article taken from the shop windows. It seemed an ideal way of trading, direct from the maker to the consumer, without even the intervention of a co-operative store. The din was usually something tremendous, especially in quarters like the coppersmiths' bazaar, where all sorts of utensils were being beaten out on little anvils from sheets of copper. The street called Straight is wider than one might have expected, and

the bazaars there are two stories high on each side of a thoroughfare that is roofed in. These are selling rather than manufacturing bazaars, and you can trade on the ground-floor or mount up to the wooden gallery, just as you please. The street ends at the door of the great mosque, once so famous, but now, like the suburban jerry builder's paradise, filled with heaps of lime, and cut stone, and sand, and all the usual confusion that waits on the erection of a block of houses. Since the fire that nearly destroyed the mosque they have been rebuilding, and apparently do not make very rapid progress with their work.

The weather was so unexpectedly cold that I was compelled to buy additional clothing, and the only thing that seemed at all suitable was an Arabian abbieh, several of which a tall Arab was peddling in the street called Straight. He told my dragoman that these garments had been constructed by his wife, who lived about twelve miles from Damascus, and when about half a dozen were completed, he came into Damascus and sold them. The price was two and a half mejedehs, or something like eight shillings and threepence, and a more serviceable or warmer greatcoat I never before possessed in my

life. It appeared to be fashioned of one piece of cloth; at least, up to date, I have been able to find no seam in it. In colour it had broad bands of black and white running perpendicularly, and it was ornamented by an edging of red embroidery. It reached from the neck to the heels, and had no sleeves, no buttons, no pockets, and, all in all, is a garment I can strongly recommend to any man in the habit of getting inebriated, who finds a difficulty in negotiating the ordinary top-coat of commerce. This wonderful article of apparel is as thick and as water-proof as a plank, and the Arabs use it indiscriminately as an overcoat, a night-shirt, and a prayer-rug, all of which purposes it answers admirably. The absence of buttons enables you to wrap it round you as tightly as you please, and it keeps out even the piercing cold of the mountain regions of Syria. This garment, useful as it was, never took kindly to me, and became evidence against me later on, when, under the persuasion of certain officials, I consented to spend some time in prison. The distinguished idiot who occupied the chief official position in the place said it was quite evident that I had come into Turkey disguised as an Arab in order to find out something. The people of Damascus had apparently

no delusions upon that score, and took me for nothing but what I was, a thin-skinned Westerner who suffered so much from the cold that he was willing to put on any sort of blanket that would keep out the bitter wind. They usually laughed as I passed them, and I don't blame them. However, one met more scowls than laughter in Damascus, and it was very palpable that they do not look with favour upon intruders. There is, moreover, for the Western visitor a certain vague feeling of danger and mystery as he treads the tortuous maze of those narrow streets. It is not so many years ago that Damascus rose against its Christian population and massacred more than 6,000 of them, burning their quarter to the ground, and ruining, for the time at least, the trade of the city, which was largely in Christian hands. It seems to a stranger that a recurrence of this disaster might at any moment become possible. Still, this sense of apprehension may be due entirely to imagination or to ignorance of the language. When we were driving in a carriage through one of the narrowest lanes of Damascus, we nearly ran over a fierce-looking Arab, who sprang into a doorway to save himself. His eyes glared, he shook his fist, and vehemently

screamed out a torrent of language that, from its sound, I judged to consist chiefly of the most terrible imprecations. The driver appeared to strike at him with his whip, and I fully expected that the answer would be a shot; but as the dragoman, who understood the lingo, seemed in no way moved by the occurrence, I asked him what the man had said.

'Oh,' he answered, 'the Arab is merely telling the driver that a lot of boys are hanging on behind the carriage, and he asked him to give them a cut with the whip, which the driver has done.'

This was a most simple explanation of what seemed to my untutored ears the beginning of a tragedy, and it shows how an uninformed stranger may misapprehend what is passing around him. All in all that carriage drive was rather an unpleasant experience. The streets were scarcely wider than the carriage itself, and were always crowded with foot-passengers, yet the driver paid not the slightest attention to the comfort or safety of anyone, but whipped up his horses and drove like a chariot of destruction among the crowd, making all ahead of us scatter as best they could into doorways or on to the counters of bazaars. No one hurled stones at us, as they certainly would have been quite justified

in doing, neither did they make any protest; it was all taken as a natural thing that the man who had a carriage should ride down the foot-passenger if he could. It was quite useless to get the dragoman to expostulate with the driver. The latter shrugged his shoulders, amazed that we cared anything about the fate of the unfortunate foot-passengers. 'Let them get out of the way,' he said—which was difficult advice to follow, unless they had a balloon each, or wings.

A young author told me once that, although he loathed politics, he was in the habit of joining political campaigns at election time, and canvassing for a candidate, in order that he might have an excuse for entering strange houses. He liked to see the interior of other people's homes, and thus learn how his fellows lived. Damascus would be an ideal spot for that young man. The showing of house interiors is one of the stock industries of the place. There is a house in a narrow street at Beyrout which is a dream of architectural beauty inside, but which looks like a factory as far as the exterior is concerned. In Damascus there is always a dramatic contrast between the inside and the outside of a house. The blank mud walls of the exterior, broken

only by a stout door, give no indication of what may be seen once that door has admitted the stranger. The street portal usually gives access to an open court in which various shrubs grow, sometimes a palm, an orange, a lemon, or a fig tree, all semi-tropical plants, whose presence makes you wonder how they manage to exist during some of the extremely cold days which Damascus experiences in winter, standing as it does several thousand feet above the sea-level. Possibly the reason may be that the sun is always strong, and the walls save those tender plants from the biting winds. There is a passage from the outside courts to a square in the interior, the centre of which is open to the sky, while around it are the rooms and covered verandas which look upon the flowing fountain in the middle. The pavement is usually of marble, sometimes pure white, sometimes black and white, and sometimes a varicoloured mosaic. The slender Moorish pillars that support the roof are also of marble with marvellously carved arches and cornices. At the end of each recess is generally to be found a marble bench for sitting or reclining on, upholstered with luxurious rugs and soft pillows, while here and there before it stand little arabesque tables bearing tobacco and

cigarettes. Glass bottles with coils of tubing and amber mouthpieces are indication that here facing the fountain is the smoking-room of the house. In most of the enclosed rooms the marble floors are at two levels, the proprietor and his family occupying the upper level and his servants the lower. In many of the houses we saw the owner had once been rich, and was now come down in the world, which is an easy thing to accomplish in Damascus, as, indeed, is the case in cities farther West. From one a tremendous contribution had been exacted to help carry on the Greek war, another had made disastrous railway speculations, and so on. In some cases the splendid marble-floored rooms, with their prettily frescoed walls and ceilings and cornices, were used as storehouses for grain, the house itself contributing to the revenue of its owner through the fees demanded for the showing of it.

The most striking and lovely sight, however, about Damascus is the view of the city itself from the hill-top to the north-west, which the eye may observe while the nose remains idle—always an advantage in the East. It is here that Mahomet is said to have stood with only a few followers at his back, declaring he would not enter the city, as Allah intended that

man should have but one paradise, and his was to be in heaven. It is added that when Mahomet had 100,000 men at his back he was influenced by no such compunction, but forthwith entered. This, however, can hardly be true, as the Moslems took Damascus in the year 634, two years after Mahomet had died. Nevertheless, Damascus is a holy city of the Moslems, for here lie buried three of Mahomet's wives and his most celebrated daughter—whose grave, by the way, is also shown at Medina. And from Damascus every year starts the pilgrim caravan for Mecca, accompanying the dromedary which has over its back the green canopy containing the new covering sent annually by the Sultan, to be hung up in the great mosque at Mecca. This important procession is escorted by all the civil and ecclesiastical dignitaries of the place, accompanied by an imposing military display.

The ancient city, as viewed from this height of 500 feet above it, presents a most entrancing spectacle. It is like a great white solid circle of innumerable pearls surrounded by a vivid setting of emeralds. The two rivers that flow into Damascus from the mountains and lose themselves shortly after in the arid desert are the cause of this oasis of

luxurious vegetation which seems so affectionately to embrace the white city, with its cloud-like canopies of domes and numerous sky-piercing minarets. No wonder the indignant Naaman said to the prophet, when commanded to bathe in the Jordan: 'Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?' For thus it must seem to any citizen of Damascus. No matter how often the city was taken and destroyed—and it has been captured more frequently than any other habitation on earth—it was always rebuilt because of its rivers. Ancient leases were given in England to continue in being as long as grass grows and water runs, and in like manner Damascus holds its lease of life from Nature. No Westerner ever appreciates water until he has paid a visit to the arid East.

About a mile to the west of Damascus, at the foot of the mountains, is the gorge from which the river Abana issues to the plain, and here are situated a café and some gardens, where a man may spend a happy day. Between this gorge and the city is a broad parade-ground where troops are exercised, and where in the evening the young bloods of the city who possess Arabian horses come out to play an equestrian game somewhat like polo, but lacking the ball.

Toward sunset, while the bugles were blowing in the huge surrounding barracks, and the Turkish troops were singing 'God save the Sultan,' as they are compelled to do every evening, we stood and watched the antics of the horsemen on this plain. Each man had a long stick which he flourished like a spear, selecting some other galloping horseman, and hurling the stick lancewise at him. Part of the game seemed to be the recovering of the stick without dismounting, which was a somewhat difficult feat to perform. The horses were all most gorgeous in their trappings, and they raced at breakneck speed over the not too level plain, guided apparently by a touch of the heel. We stood there long, in the humane hope that someone would come a cropper; but they all seemed to miss disaster by the most narrow of shaves.

Chapter IX

Our Dragoman—The Damascus Railway—Trouble with the Governor—A Trip to Tripoli—High Jinks on Landing—The very Worst Hotel in the World.

MUCH of the comfort and pleasure derived from a visit to a land with an unknown tongue is due to a competent interpreter. Most of us who live in England have our knowledge of Arabic limited to the justly celebrated notation of that name, therefore my comrade and myself considered ourselves fortunate in having with us a genial young Maronite named Selim G. Tabet, who spoke fluently Arabic, English, Turkish, Greek, and other useful languages, He was an indefatigable young man, infinitely obliging, and, what is rarer in these parts, scrupulously honest. He had been recommended to us by the agent to the *Prince* line in Beyrout, and the only flaw I could possibly pick in the character of

Selim was his pathetic and almost cringing fear of the Turkish official. However, it is all but impossible for a man who has breathed the free air of the West to appreciate accurately the situation of a civilized person under Turkish dominion. On several occasions we were stopped by some person in authority, and Selim was questioned shrewdly as to our object in visiting that particular section of the country. During these interrogations he came as near to trembling as any man can as he breathlessly asked us to produce our documents and satisfy the questioner. As a rule, the official would examine our papers minutely, and, handing them back with a glance of unsatisfied suspicion, would walk away with an abruptness that could hardly be termed polite. Then all the young Maronite's valour returned to him, and he would tell us courageously what sternly decisive action might have been expected on his part had the official proved obstreperous.

We went back over the Lebanon railroad in the daylight, so that we might enjoy the scenery. At Muallakah, on the top, an hour or so is allowed for luncheon. Having had a corner seat all the way from Damascus, and desiring to retain it, I left upon it my Arabian overcoat and my handbag. On re-

turning from lunch I found a gigantic Turk had calmly moved my impedimenta, and was occupying my place. I went over to the dragoman, who was standing on another part of the platform conversing with his friend the landlord of the inn, and said to him:

'There is a man in my seat, and I wish you would tell him to get out.'

Selim replied that this was an unheard-of outrage, and came heroically forward; but the moment he saw who sat in the seat he wilted, turned pale, and drew me aside.

'That is the Governor of the next district,' he said. 'I will find you a seat in another carriage.'

'No, you won't; that's my place, and I want it.'

'But he's the Governor.'

'He may be twenty Governors, for all I care, but I am governor of that portion of the train. I have paid for it, occupied it, and am going to have it.'

'Let me get you another seat, sir,' implored Selim; 'the Governor is only going for a short distance, and then you can return to that carriage.'

'The corner seats are all occupied,' I replied, 'and I want a corner seat. I don't go over the mountains of Lebanon every day, and am not going to be cheated out of my place.'

'I will turn somebody out, and get you a corner seat somewhere else,' insisted the dragoman.

'No, let us have even-handed justice; that would merely be piling tyranny on tyranny. I want my own seat, and my own seat I intend to have. Now, are you going to speak to this man, or shall I be compelled to do so myself?'

Selim's knees began to knock together, and his lips turned blue as he beseeched me to be satisfied with a place elsewhere. Seeing his distress, I left him, went into the carriage, picked up my bag and coat, and spoke to the Governor with all the politeness which my words imply:

'Here, old man, you're in my place, and you must get out. I want that seat.'

The Governor looked up at me bewildered, not understanding what had been said. But one of his entourage, frowning heavily, said in passable English:

'This is the honourable Governor of the next district.'

'So I have been told,' I answered; 'therefore translate to him what I say, which is to the effect that he has removed my belongings without my permission, and is occupying my seat, for which I

paid and in which I propose to sit from this station to Beyrout.'

'What does he say?' the Governor appeared to ask of his comrade.

The other seemed to translate my statement into Arabic. The Governor instantly rose, and bowed with a courtesy that made me ashamed of myself. His companion then said that the Governor tendered me a thousand apologies, as when he removed the coat he thought it belonged to some Arab. I returned thanks to the official for his complaisance, and begged the interpreter to assure him that my predilection for a seat in the corner arose from the fact that I was a stranger in Syria; that the country through which we were travelling being most grand and imposing, I was deeply desirous of seeing it, but that, nevertheless, I should be happy if the Governor would consent still to occupy the place he had so promptly vacated. This he most generously refused to do, saying he was delighted at the compliment paid to his country, and overjoyed that I condescended to admire it. Thus the international episode ended, and before the Governor left the train we were the greatest of friends, and I had a cordial invitation to visit him. He deeply regretted

his inability to speak English, and I mourned the fact that my own defective early education had not included Turkish.

Arriving at Beyrout, we found ourselves undecided whether to go south to Sidon or north to Tripoli. I preferred to go south, but my companion thought we had better take to the north.

'You see,' I said to him, 'we can work up through Sidon and Tyre to the Bay of Akka, and then strike inland to Tiberias, finally reaching El Kuds, which is a town I want very much to visit.'

'What is there to see there?' he asked.

'Oh, I think it is by all odds the most interesting place in Palestine.'

'I never heard of it,' replied my friend.

'Oh yes, you did,' I assured him, 'although it was probably under the name of Jerusalem. Thus you see what it is to hold converse in the train with a Turkish Pasha. He told me that El Kuds was the proper name for Jerusalem, and I am merely working off my knowledge on you.'

By going south we should pass through Tyre and Sidon and Acre, from thence crossing to Lake Tiberias, and along the Jordan to Jerusalem, after which we could make our way to Jaffa, and there join

our steamer. My friend, however, was tired of the accommodation afforded us throughout Syria, and yearned for the fleshpots of the *Creole Prince*, which I have to admit had a great attraction for myself.

A wretched little steamer, called the *Prince George*, which the Turks had probably captured from the Greeks, was our only conveyance to the south; while, as far as the north was concerned, there waited for us a magnificent Clyde-built steamer of the Egyptian line, and by going to Tripoli we could come next day upon the *Creole Prince*, which was cruising up and down the coast of Syria in a most delightful fashion. Not knowing what to do, we tossed up for it, and the north won. Accordingly, we made our way to the steamer, and took passage for Tripoli. The afternoon was charming, the Mediterranean like a sea of glass, the Khedivial steamer luxurious, and so we enjoyed our fine sea-promenade along the rugged picturesque Syrian coast, with its high chain of mountains to the east. The Arabs and Turks, even those who have a good deal of money to spare, rarely spend it for first-class accommodation on these steamers, and yet they travel in great comfort. They take mattresses with them, and an ample supply of blankets and that sort of thing. These,

when the weather is fine, they spread out on deck, and collect their family about them on the springy oases; some wrapping themselves up in their cloaks and going soundly to sleep, others lighting their hubble-bubbles and smoking luxuriously, sitting cross-legged on the mattress, thus economizing room.

As the evening drew on, the open spaces of the deck were occupied by Mohammedans at their interesting and gymnastic prayers. The preparatory ablutions on shipboard are of the slightest, merely consisting of pouring some water from a tin can on the hands and bare feet. Then they spread their rugs on deck, so that they may bow toward Mecca, standing, kneeling, and prostrating themselves upon them, always facing the ancient capital of Mohammedanism. So strict are they, that if the ship veers round, as often happens, the prayer-rug has to be shifted several times during the devotions. Every good Moslem prays five times a day, and four times in each session of appeal he repeats what may be called the Lord's Prayer of Mohammedanism, which is considered by scholars to be the gem of the Koran, and runs as follows: 'In the name of God, the compassionate Compassioner. Praise be to God,

the Lord of the worlds, the compassionate Compassioner, the Sovereign of the day of judgment. Thee do we worship, and of Thee do we beg assistance. Direct us in the right way, in the way of those to whom Thou hast been gracious; on whom there is no wrath, and who go not astray.'

Coming to anchor opposite Tripoli, there ensued a scene of the wildest confusion I have ever beheld, contrasting strangely with the orderly landing which takes place from a European steamer. As soon as we came to rest it was evident that the Oxford and Cambridge boat-race was making toward us, only there was a great deal more splashing in the rowing, and perhaps more bad language used between the competitors than is ever heard during that classic contest. These great rowing-boats came pell-mell, all in a huddle, up to our gangway. There were between ten and twenty large-sized craft, and it seemed as if a free fight was going on at the bottom of the ship's ladder. All the chief rowers of the boats stormed and fought and squabbled, while other athletic individuals came tearing up the sloping stairs outside. These energetic and rampageous watermen charged in among the crowd that waited around the top of the gangway, and we experienced

all the excitement of being boarded by an enemy. One pirate snatched my handbag from me, and flung it airily over the side of the vessel; another grasped my greatcoat, and sent that fluttering through space; each shouting to the scoundrel below to secure the articles while the victim was being attended to on deck. It was a great blessing that the boats were so numerous and packed so tightly together, for thus nothing tossed so recklessly overboard could fall into the water. Each pirate claimed that this robbery of my belongings gave him a mortgage on me, and together they dragged me down the stairway. Then ensued an interesting struggle, of which I was a helpless sufferer, each vociferating in deplorable Arabic expletives that he was to have the final right of carrying me to Tripoli. I went in one boat, my valise in another, my overcoat in a third, and all three desperadoes united when we landed in claiming due recompense. But the trouble actually began when I was thrown into the stern of a boat and held down by a minion thereof, so that I could not escape. Everybody was tossing bedding and baskets and water-cans and lunch-baskets over the side, trusting to Providence that they would land in some boat. I thought for awhile I was

going to share the fate of Desdemona as the mattresses and blankets came raining down upon me. When the boat-race restarted again for the shore, the rowers pulling like madmen and cursing each other, I had time to look around and see that my companion, who was crushed in between a couple of Arabs in another boat, looked very much the worse for wear. I hailed him, and bade him be of good cheer. He replied dolefully that he had lost all his belongings, and I comforted him by telling him I was in the same fix. We now missed the genial Selim G. Tabet, for no one could speak a word of our language, and we seemed to be in the hands of the most turbulent populace that lived on all the borders of the Mediterranean. Landing by the side of a tall pier, the boatmen hauled us up on the deck of it by the collar, as if there wasn't a moment to spare, and we were bales of perishable goods for immediate delivery. Our clothes were torn, and when my companion was hove up alongside of me we were two forlorn, ragamuffinly-looking individuals. All the other passengers, being accustomed to this sort of usage, sauntered on their way down the pier; but we two remained at the end of it, surrounded by no fewer than six boatmen, each of

whom demanded immense but unintelligible sums of money, which they represented by spreading the fingers of one hand aloft, and shaking the other fist at us. The man who had taken on my valise demanded his pay, the boatman who had actually transported me demanded his pay, and the fellow who seemed to be declaring that he had run great dangers in protecting my greatcoat also demanded cash before he would give up my garment. In like manner, three others surrounded my friend.

'What are we to do?' he said, in despair. 'Why didn't we bring Selim along to protect us?'

'I'm sure I don't know,' I replied; 'but if there is no one in this place who can speak English, I expect we shall have to camp out on the end of the pier for the night.'

Finally there came slowly toward us a dignified Turkish official, who spoke French.

'What is the trouble?' he asked.

'No trouble at all,' I answered, 'except that I want a permit from the Turkish Government to kill at least five of these ruffians. We were going on to Alexandretta, when these villains came aboard, took our things, and bundled us into the boats. There isn't another steamer for a week, and so we want to

know to whom we must look for our expenses and due recompense for this outrage.'

'Oh,' said the Turk, 'that was a most serious thing to do. Do you mean to say they have hauled you ashore here against your will?'

'Certainly,' I replied unblushingly; 'we were under the Sultan's protection on an Egyptian steamer, and I am sure his officers will not allow us to be kidnapped in this manner in spite of our protests.'

An instant silence had fallen upon the six pirates on the advent of the officer. They awaited with some anxiety the result of our conference, looking from one to the other of us. The Turkish official uttered a few quiet words very solemnly, which evidently explained to them that they had kidnapped two Alexandretta passengers in their zeal. The effect on his listeners was instantaneous. They dropped our property on the deck of the pier before he had completed the sentence, turned, and ran like deer. They were a set of villains with bare, brown legs, and the pace they accomplished in their flight I have never seen equalled. As there seemed to be some chance that they might be stopped by an officer at the shore end of the pier, some of them

leaped into the shallow water, and thus splashed to land; others, however, got through the gate without being arrested, and a moment later all six had disappeared into the town. They evidently determined to put a Limited Liability Act as speedily as possible between themselves and the consequences of their alleged assault. The officer turned to us with a smile.

'It is all right,' I assured him; 'and now, if you will tell us how much we honestly owe the men who brought us ashore, we will pay it cheerfully.'

The officer replied that a shilling each to our actual transporters would be ample, and this we ultimately paid when fear had subsided in the bosoms of our kidnappers, and they came to our hotel later whining for their money.

There seemed to be but one hotel in the important town of Tripoli-by-the-Shore, and this was a large square building rising from the edge of the water, and bearing on its side the pretentious announcement, 'Grand Hotel of Europe and Asia,' or words to that effect. We found it landlorded by a corpulent Greek, and, without wishing to compliment his tavern at all, I may say it was the vilest hole we

ever got into either in Europe, Asia, or Africa, or any other continent. The Arabs and Turks who were our fellow-lodgers were not nearly in such bad plight as we were, because they had brought their bedding with them, and took empty rooms, which they thus furnished for the night. The hotel occupied a lovely situation, and if it had been rightly kept, might have been a delightful place to stay in. A balcony extended along the whole front of the upper story, and here, not knowing the food and lodging that awaited us, we brought out our chairs and sat congratulating ourselves on the fine view of the Mediterranean and the outlying islands it possessed. We had to exercise some care on this balcony, for the boards were broken and rotten, and the wonder is that we did not drop through to the street below. The landlord knew only two phrases of the English language: one was 'Not good?' uttered in a tone of inquiry, and the other was 'All right!' given forth with the emphasis of finality. I don't suppose the man had washed himself since the Acropolis was built. We had several courses for dinner, each one, if possible, worse than what had gone before, and all practically uneatable. The landlord himself was our waiter, and when he flung

down the food on the board he would ejaculate in an interrogative manner, 'Not good?' and when we shook our heads, he cheerfully replied, with satisfaction, in an affirmative inflection, 'Not good! All right!' And so he left us.

Chapter X

On the Track of Beer—An Anxious Search for a Drink—A Friendly Stranger—A Personally-conducted Tour around Tripoli—Embarrassing Politeness—An Old Castle as a Gaol.

It was too late that night to explore Tripoli, so, being tired, we betook ourselves to bedrooms that were veritable chambers of horror, such as Madame Tussaud never dreamt of. Next day breakfast was brought to us, consisting of eggs, bread-and-butter, and little thimble-like cups of Turkish coffee. The butter not being fit for axle-grease, we left it alone; the bread was unspeakable and revolting. I rummaged around the place, hoping to find something either eatable or drinkable, and came upon an empty beer-bottle which had on it the brand of a well-known firm in Munich. Beneath the magic title 'Munich' appeared an unpronounceable name and address in Tripoli. That there should be prime bottles of

Munich beer in this outlandish thirsty place seemed too good news to be true. Taking the bottle with me, I sought the landlord, who was plucking a lean pigeon on the flat roof of his house—a handy place, because the feathers would then fly all over the town without further trouble to him.

'Have you any more bottles of this brand?' I inquired.

'Not good?' he asked.

'Very good indeed if you have any more of it,' I replied.

'Not good—all right;' and he went on with his plucking. No further information was it possible to get out of him, so I took the label off the bottle, and, with my friend, started on a pilgrimage for beer. It was soon evident that the liquor merchant did not reside in the port town. The real city of Tripoli is about two miles inland, and is connected by a weird tramway line with the harbour. We mounted to the top of the vehicle that was waiting, and jingled up to the inland town, passing along the side of a road that was bordered by luxuriant orange groves; in fact, the plain of Tripoli seems to be fertile beyond expression. Every tree was a dense mass of foliage, and the golden fruit was hanging

down its back. We met caravans of camels trudging down to the port, like a circus procession.

Our thirst, which had not been quenched for days and days, increased as we continued our search for the beer-bottles. 'He who drinks beer thinks beer,' says the proverb; but he who has a desert thirst in his throat, and knows there is good beer in the neighbourhood, if he can only find it, thinks beer more earnestly than the other fellow. At last, in the narrow main street of the real Tripoli, we came upon the beer merchant; and his walls, lined with bins of real brown bottled Munich, were, by all odds, the most picturesque sight we had seen in the East. The merchant was conversing with a man who seemed to be an officer of some kind, and this gentleman kindly translated to the merchant our yearning desire for beer. The merchant, however, appeared to have no desire for custom, and slowly shook his head, enunciating something in Arabic.

'He says,' the interpreter told us, 'that he sells only at wholesale; if you want beer to drink, you must go to the hotel, and there order it.'

'But,' I protested, 'we have just come from the hotel, and could find no beer. The proprietor says

he has no more Munich, and that is why we came here.'

'Which hotel are you staying at?'

'Good heavens! you don't mean to say there is another? I wish we had known that. It cannot be worse than the one we have left.'

'There is a very good hotel indeed up the street, about five minutes' walk from here. I will show you the way, and then you can get your beer.'

This obliging individual accompanied us to the inn. Narrow as this thoroughfare was, the hotel projected half-way across it. It seemed to be much cleaner than the one we had left, and we now regretted that we had not known of this hostelry. Pouring water is everywhere audible and visible in Tripoli —a pleasant fact, which gives the place a unique distinction among Eastern cities. The liquid bubbles up in great marble basins, and seems to be illimitable in quantity; it is allowed to run to waste with a lavishness which is rare on that coast. Our guide took us to a corner room, and seated us at a window looking down the narrow street, where a row of kneeling camels were being laden with boxes and bales. The proprietor of the hotel came to us

wiping his hands on an apron. As his hotel was much cleaner than the other, so he seemed to have washed later in the Christian era than our fat host down at the coast. The beer-yearning condition of our throats was explained to him, and he departed, being beseeched not to lose any unnecessary time. A few moments later we saw him hurrying down the street toward the beer merchant's premises, and finally he reappeared with a bottle by the neck in each hand. As I remember, these bottles cost us about four shillings each, but they were worth their weight in gold. We offered our guide a bottle, but he declined, saying he never drank beer. He sat there smiling and polite, and as we had already tendered to him our most effusive thanks, bidding him farewell three or four times without his showing any inclination to go, we began to wonder what we were to do with him. He didn't look like the man to whom we could offer money, and already we had expressed our obligation to him as far as words were concerned. Finally, when the beer was consumed, we paid our bill, rose, and shook hands with him once more. He got upon his feet also, returned our greeting most cordially, and accompanied us down to the street. Here we reiterated our gratitude,

lifted our hats in farewell salutation, and turned to depart, but he stood by us.

'You are going to see Tripoli, perhaps?' he said.

I replied that such was our intention.

'It is the most beautiful town in the world,' he alleged enthusiastically; and on my admitting that this fact had hitherto been concealed from me, he launched out in praise of its picturesque situation, and the amplitude of unfailing flowing water—adding, that it had more soap factories than any town of its size on earth. I inquired what they did with the soap, and he informed me it was used for washing.

'Not in Tripoli,' I ventured. 'The demand must come from the outside.'

He admitted this was the case, but added that Tripoli had more Turkish baths than any other city in Syria. This was stupefying intelligence, for although you may export soap, the inhabitants of a town must support their own Turkish baths. He turned us down a narrower street than the one we were in, and stopped at an edifice covered with a large cupola. We entered an immense room filled with greenish light, and found ourselves under the big dome. The floor was of marble, and a circular

marble tank, over whose rounded edge water was flowing, occupied the centre of the apartment.

'What's this?' I asked—'a mosque?'

'No; a Turkish bath.'

Attendants most meagrely attired, with long Turkish towels over their shoulders, their bare feet in clattering wooden sandals, flitted about the dimly-lighted room. The illumination of the dome was attended to in a unique manner. When the rounded cupola had been built of stone and cement, bottles were placed mouth upwards in the mortar. There were some hundreds, of all sizes and shapes—beer bottles, whisky bottles, coloured bottles, and clear glass bottles. The arched roof was still rain-proof, and what light there was filtered through the bottoms of these bottles.

Once outside in the narrow street, we again shook hands with our comrade, who again warmly returned the hand-pressure, and again walked contentedly along by our side. He said it was a delight to show his beautiful city to appreciative strangers. My friend and myself, speaking English, which this man did not understand, consulted as to what we were to do. We didn't want to insult him by offering him a tip, and yet if he hung on to us like this, and really

desired a tip, we certainly wished to give it to him, for he evidently knew the place thoroughly, and was an excellent and intelligent guide. But his costume and his manners made it impossible that he should be a professional cicerone. We wandered through the maze of bazaars, finding them, after those of Damascus, the most interesting we had seen. He took us down into a lower part of the city, where the thoroughfares were only wide enough for two people to walk abreast, then under a dark archway, and out on to a bridge which spanned a rapid river, whose clear water babbled musically through the centre of the city on its way to the sea. On each side of the stream houses sprang right from the edge of the water, with numerous balconies hanging over the swift current. It was a charming sight, with something suggestive of Venice about it. After admiring the view and praising it as it deserved, which eulogy seemed to give great pleasure to our guide, I in desperation offered him two silver mejedehs, which amounted to a solicitor's fee of six and eightpence. He waved these coins gracefully aside, smiling benignly.

'If you will come with me now,' he said, 'I shall take you to the prison.'

This seemed, all in all, the right sort of punishment for the glaring insult of which I had been guilty in offering money to one who was evidently a gentleman. We followed him up a steep hill to a great stone castle overhanging the precipitous cliff that borders the rapid river. From the western front of this castle there was an amazing view of the minarets, domes, and spires of the city, for about half of the population of Tripoli are Christians, and twenty or thirty church spires contend with the minaret. Beyond was the living green of the orange groves, terminating at the shores of the bay; then in the distance the seaside town, and to the line of the horizon the unbroken blue of the Mediterranean. The guide was as pleased with our outspoken admiration of the prospect as if he himself had been the owner of the whole landscape. With enthusiastic joy he pointed out, in the grim wall of the castle, a round iron cannon-ball, which, he said, had been fired years ago by the British fleet—and if that was the case, the shooting was remarkably excellent. I don't know how far out the ship stood, but the projectile had to cover something like two miles of land before it came to rest in the walls of the citadel. This castle is said to have been built by the

Crusaders, who held Tripoli for five years. And certainly it is as gloomy and mediæval-looking a structure as could well be imagined. Passing up an ascending crooked tunnel, we were admitted, after some parley, by the opening of massive but dilapidated oaken iron-bolted gates. Here was an amazing courtyard, sky-covered and bordered by every possible style of building. In some structures that were simply great iron cages, similar to but larger than those at the Zoo in which tigers are confined, crouched unfortunate wretches who were, our guide informed us, mostly Armenians, probably imprisoned for the crime of allowing the Turk to massacre their relatives. In some instances outsiders had bribed their way through the massive gates, and now, squatting in front of a cage, held converse with its inmate—a Turkish soldier standing by, so that no treason might be talked.

As we stood in the centre of the square, several cages were opened, and their occupants came crouching toward us, kneeling down at our feet and endeavouring to kiss our hands. I asked our guide what this loathsome abasement meant, and he said they were begging for money, which they would give to their guards, and so purchase certain im-

munities. We bestowed some coins upon them, which the guards at once appropriated, and drove the wretches back cringing into their cages. On the eastern side of this immense prison there is practically no wall, and one may stand at the edge and look down the dizzy precipice formed by the side of the prison and the rocky cliff beneath to the edge of the river. Away below, an industrious donkey and a revolving wheel continually pump up water for the use of the garrison and prisoners. We were glad to get out of this abode of misery and descend once more to the city. Our bewildering self-appointed guide took us through a maze of streets, and at last along a little alley into a private house. Leading us up one flight of stairs to a large bright and exceedingly clean room, around the walls of which ran a couch, he announced that this was his house, and bade us be seated. Then he produced a basket full of photographs, which seemed to include all his relatives scattered over Syria and elsewhere, and for a time we gazed on these, afraid to make any comment, and not knowing exactly what to do in the circumstances. Presently an old lady and a young girl of about twenty, who was charmingly pretty, came in, and were introduced to us as

the mother and sister of our host. This meeting gave us the knowledge that, whoever our guide might be, he was no Mohammedan, for in a Moslem household it is a breach of etiquette even to inquire after the health of your host's family. A servant brought in a plate of sweets such as we had never seen or tasted before, and which we took with some dismay. There were also handed to us saucers of a reddish gelatinous substance, exceedingly sugary, which was eaten with a spoon. But however questionably adapted for Western palates the sweets were, there was no doubt whatever about the tea. The young lady herself made it in an adjoining room, and we could see her through the doorway busied with a Russian samovar. I shall always regret that I had not the courage to go into the next room and learn how that tea was made, for it was by all odds the best I have ever tasted. It was served in thinnish glasses, each supported by a filigree receptacle of crusted silver with a handle to it. A bit of fresh lemon, apparently just brought in from the garden by the servant, was in every glass, and the fluid was of a rich straw colour, and possessed an aroma and quality that were delicious. Never before or since have I had tea to compare with it.

Our guide, who always exhibited a childlike delight in anything that pleased us, said the tea had come on camels' backs overland from China to Tripoli, and that it was made in Chino-Russian fashion. I began to fear that we were never going to be allowed to leave Tripoli, but at last said to him that we were every moment expecting a large steamer, and, being afraid to miss it, begged to take our leave. He replied cordially that there was no need of hurrying; that the bay could be seen from the top of the house, and he would at once reconnoitre and find out if the steamer were in sight. On returning he reported that the waters of the Mediterranean were absolutely steamerless, and that it must be hours before a craft of any kind came into the port. As I saw with apprehension that orders had been given for the preparing of a meal, I resolved to break away if I had to run for it. So, making the excuses that suggested themselves on the spur of the moment, we passed down the stairs, out into the court, and from thence into the street. In the hasty consultation that ensued between my partner and myself, he suggested that we should offer gold to the man, and not silver. Just as we came to this decision our guide was by our side, smiling as usual.

I thanked him for the care he had taken of us and for his hospitality, and said that, as we had no way of returning it unless he condescended to accept a token of our esteem in the shape of the gold coinage of the empire, he would earn our undying gratitude by thus removing the obligation from our shoulders —in part, at least. Thereupon he took the gold coins I proffered, and so our acquaintance with him ended. What his position was in Tripoli, his name, or his occupation, I haven't the slightest idea, but through his agency we certainly saw the town as thoroughly as any two foreigners since the Crusades.

That evening the welcome bulk of the *Creole Prince* appeared in the bay, and glad indeed we were to find ourselves once more aboard. The excellence of the fare, the cleanliness of the lodging, the delight of the smoking-room, the comfort of the big saloon, were probably never so thoroughly appreciated by any two returning prodigals before. We swore we would never leave the ship again, but cruise with her up and down the Syrian coast, as was her delightful habit. In this resolve, however, we reckoned without the Turk, as we were very shortly to discover.

Chapter XI

In the Bay of Antioch—A Wholesale Invitation to a Marriage Feast—The Port of Suadiyeh—Some Amazing Horsemanship—Make Haste to the Wedding—A Wild Ride over an Awful Road.

The ship weighed anchor some time during the night, and next morning we found her moored in the ancient Bay of Antioch, opposite the mouth of the Orontes River—a river as crooked as the Meander, and formed, so mythologists tell us, by a gigantic snake which was driven out of the country, and whose tortuous course to the sea ever afterwards was used as a bed by the Orontes. On either hand there is a mountain, each over a mile high, and on the swampy plain between, the Valley of the Orontes, the town of Suadiyeh is scattered up and down the land. On an eminence a couple of miles back from the shore gleams the white building of the American

Mission, in charge of the Rev. Mr. Dodds, whose acquaintance we were shortly afterward to make.

The morning was dark and lowering, with a strong wind from the shore. The energetic captain, without waiting for his breakfast, ordered a boat to be lowered, and with four stalwart rowers made for the mouth of the Orontes, and there disappeared. His mission was to stir up the merchant and his men, who were partially to fill up the hold of the *Creole Prince* with wheat, for this steamer is one of the numerous craft that feed England. There were no signs of the grain-boats, which had to come a mile or so down the Orontes and out into the bay to transfer their wheat to the steamer. This was unusual; everywhere else along the Syrian coast the whole populace seemed to be waiting for us, and there was a boat-race from the shore to the ship, lighters clustering around even before the anchor was dropped. Here all was silent, and the captain was anxious to know what the trouble was.

Breakfast over, some of the passengers began to make heroic plans for an excursion to Antioch, there being a rumour that it was four hours away, and that horses could be got at Suadiyeh. Distance is counted by hours in this part of the world—miles

signifying nothing, because of the vile state of the roads. The forenoon slipped away, and lunch-time came, but with it no sign of the captain or of the grain flotilla. We began to be alarmed, and a search expedition for the captain was proposed. Some of the officers of the United States cruiser *Raleigh*, which since that time has distinguished herself at the Philippine Islands, told me that we were going to a somewhat insecure part of the country, and that if we got into trouble and sent a post-card to the *Raleigh*, she would drop round there and make things interesting for the officials. When our captain at last returned, we learned that there was to be no loading of wheat that day. One of the merchant's sons was being married, and the inhabitants were giving their whole attention to this auspicious event. Their barks were on the shore, as the song has it, but they themselves were farther up country, dancing. A wedding in that district consumes three days, and so the outlook for loading the ship immediately was not promising. It seemed, however, that the merchant had generously invited all the passengers, and as many of the officers as could come, to attend as much of the wedding as remained uncelebrated. The captain said that if we went we

should probably give so much éclat to the occasion as to warrant hopes of getting the wheat flotilla to work the next morning. The Custom-house was a mile from the shore, and the merchant's residence some two or three miles farther inland, and we were astonished to learn that the merchant had sent something like fourteen saddle-horses down to the Custom-house with a man to lead each horse, and thus we were expected to make haste to the wedding. All of us eagerly accepted the invitation, and boats being lowered, we were rowed across the turbulent Bay of Antioch, passing a troublesome bar at the mouth of the river, and then up the sluggish Orontes, its water the colour and thickness of pea-soup. It is about as crooked as it is possible for a river to be, with low mud-banks and unexpected shoals here and there. Every here and there we saw a Turkish soldier, seated or standing by the bank, watching us with his loaded rifle in hand. Arriving at the port, we found a dozen or more boats about the size and general appearance of a Thames barge, each with one mast at the prow, lying side by side, their noses up the mud bank. The buildings of the port were not impressive in the matter of architecture. They consisted of numerous

low houses, some of mud, some of stone, and one long two-storied structure with a gable end toward the river, on the upper floor of which was the Custom-house. A balcony ran the length of the building, and an outside stairway communicated with the balcony. Passing along this elevated veranda, we entered the end room overlooking the river, and here sat several officials who scrutinized our passports and teskeries with rigid minuteness. At last the papers were declared correct, not without some misgivings apparently on the part of the stout kaimakam, who sat with crossed legs on the couch that ran the length of the room. The documents being signed, we went out to look at the herd of horses which was waiting for us. Every pattern of saddle used in Turkey was represented there, one being evidently English and fastened wrong side forward on the horse. There were no bridles or bits, but only a rope tied round the nose of each horse.

I do not shine as an equestrian, although I have gone up to the Bel Alp from the Rhone Valley—an altitude of something like 8,000 feet above the sea —attached to an almost perpendicular horse, or at least one inclined forty-five degrees, and the account

of this hazardous exploit may be read in the *Alpine Journal* and other scientific publications. But I must admit I looked with dismay on the variegated cavalry mount that was now at my disposal. After running my eye over the incongruous assortment, I said resolutely that I would walk, begging them not to delay any of the wedding festivities on my account, but to rest assured that I should ultimately reach there on foot. The underling smiled and nodded as if he perfectly agreed with me, but I saw he did not understand what I was saying, because he immediately led forward a horse surmounted by a saddle, which I at once recognised. It had a sort of blunt bowsprit of wood in front of it, projecting upward a foot or two, and at the rear was a mast and a yard-arm somewhat similar to the back of certain revolving office chairs. If the horse stumbled, the rider was certain to be impaled on the gate-post in front; and I saw that this was the identical saddle which had killed William the Conqueror at the time his horse put its foot in some hot ashes. I waved the animal thus accoutred aside, and begged his keepers to sacrifice one of the other passengers; my life was too precious. After a great struggle they put the fat man of the company in this saddle, he

struggling and protesting while he was being jammed home. The attendants kept smiling and smiling, ignoring every supplication. They had been sent there to mount a certain number of Europeans on an equal number of horses, and they were going to complete their task if the heavens or the horses fell. Seeing that we were all helpless here without an interpreter, the captain having gone back to his ship and left us thus unprotected, I started to walk to the house of joy, but was promptly stopped by a smiling soldier, heavily armed. What he had to do with the affair I could not comprehend, but he was determined that no unfair advantage should be taken of those who had brought the horses down to the port, and as by this time most of the passengers were mounted, and as it had become evident that there were not enough horsemen to go round, the attendants became more and more eager to let no one get away from them. They whipped up a rope-led quadruped to my side, and luckily the horse carried a saddle that had no wooden projections on it—a saddle that turned out to be as easy as a feather pillow, allowing a man to fall off unmolested in any direction that suited him. Without a word, two of the stalwart servants of the house of joy

picked me up and flung me airily into this saddle. There were no stirrups; in fact, the more I got acquainted with this saddle, the more convinced I became that it was merely a mattress doubled over the horse, with a rug flung over that again, and the whole kept in place by a broad strap that went over the combination and under the animal. I steadied myself as well as I could on this heap of woollen goods, which seemed somewhat unstable, the whole combination threatening to turn round under the horse's belly. The man, seeing this, took hold of the end of the strap, and, placing his left foot against the horse, pulled the belt until I thought I should have two half-horses instead of a whole one. Fastening the belt a dozen notches or more farther on than it had been before, the man flung the rope over the horse's neck, gave the animal a hearty slap on the flank, cried in Turkish, 'God bless and protect you!' and thus I started on my perilous journey. Up to this time I had an idea that I should succeed in pulling through, for I thought the man would lead the animal, holding on to the rope. He, however, had no such intention, and the horse started off with an even amble which kept me jog-jog-jogging up and down on the mattress, clinging to the mane,

not caring to grasp the rope, which I saw was rapidly slipping from the horse's neck, while I shouted with all my might, and implored the man, by whatever gods he paid allegiance to, to come and mitigate the ambition of my infuriated steed. The man waved his hand and smiled, and cried in Arabic what I took to be, 'Hang on, and trust in Providence. You are doing well; keep at it.' Alongside of me trotted a mounted soldier, who, I thought, would fall off his horse before I fell from mine, so heartily did he laugh. Take my word for it that you may believe anything you read in the papers about the cruelty of the Turkish soldiery. Any human being who could find mirth in a plight like mine is capable of unmentionable atrocities. By-and-by, becoming more accustomed to the precarious seat, I succeeded in leaning forward and acquiring the rope, but when I had it I did not know what to do with it. By hauling in the slack I succeeded in turning the horse's head to the right, but by no ingenuity could the rope be made to swerve the head to the left. Even when the horse's head did incline to the right, its body kept straight on, and so I soon saw that guidance was out of the question, which was lucky for me, because the only time I did

attempt to interfere we came to disaster. As I realized that I was not going to fall off yet for a minute or two, I became able to bestow some attention on the soldier who was so hilarious on my account. I turned toward him, and a most extraordinary spectacle he presented; so in my turn, forgetting my own imminent peril, I began to laugh at *him*, whereupon he laughed with ever-increasing merriment at *me*. His saddlery was even more amazing than mine. It seemed to consist of three or four feather-beds piled one above the other on top of the horse, and over the accumulation a great carpet had been thrown, bound to the animal by two straps, one at the front and one at the rear. This gave the horse the appearance of being some new and hitherto unknown species of camel, with a hump on its back out of all proportion to the animal's size. Perched on the top of this pyramid of haberdashery, and cross-legged, if you please, sat the Turkish soldier in his tattered uniform. A fez, that had once been red, but was now as black with dirt as the tassel that wafted in the wind behind him, covered his head, or, rather, was set well back to the rear of it. A stalwart fellow this soldier, with brown sunburnt face; two belts of cartridges, show-

ing the dull blue of the lead bullets, immense in size, were thrown over each shoulder and crossed on his breast; slung by a thick strap, and bobbing uncomfortably against his back as he rode, was a long clumsy American rifle, discarded since the Civil War. There was, of course, no stirrup to the extraordinary saddle on which the man was seated, and he needed none. With arms folded and legs crossed, his feet tucked away under him, he sat facing any direction he pleased, and made a kind of artistic apex to the extraordinary cone produced by horse, bedding, and soldier. When first I caught a glimpse of him he was sitting sideways on the horse, the better to enjoy the spectacle I presented to him. Later on, when the novelty of this had worn off, he turned his face to the horse's tail, and conversed amicably with a comrade similarly accoutred, who was following behind him. When I gained at last the courage to look over my shoulder, I saw straggling after me a long procession of variously mounted people accompanied by the two cavalrymen sent by the military authorities either to protect us or to watch us, or both, who rode out of line on the left-hand side. The horses provided being in excess of the number of passengers who availed

themselves of this means of locomotion, the attendants had mounted the spare animals, sometimes two on one horse, sometimes three, and in one case four; so, with the arms of the after-rider clasped around the man in front, they came ambling on.

Just as I began to believe that I should see civilization and the steamship once more, two of the passengers, whom I had hitherto considered reputable citizens, came tearing past me, whipping up their respective steeds after the manner of Derby winners. The Sultan's highway had proceeded eastward along the north bank of the Orontes for some distance; then it struck north-eastward across the fields. Now, as no part of these marshy plains could be worse than the road, the thoroughfare had dissipated itself all over the place, and one had choice of something less than a hundred routes, each one of which was in rather a worse condition than the others. It was no place for a horse-race, as I tried to gasp forth spasmodically to those two reckless persons, one of whom we on board ship called the Boy, and who up to this momentous occasion had conducted himself in a sensible manner that had endeared him to all of us. Yet here he was on top of a frantic brute plying a whip now on

one side, now on the other, of the galloping animal. The worst of it was that this energetic display fired my quadruped with sudden emulation, and it started off over the most frightfully rough country at a gallop, each plunge of which threw me so far above its back that I was kept in constant uncertainty as to which side I should ultimately fall.

'That's right,' shouted this heedless youth encouragingly; 'come in with us; we counted on you. We bet half-a-crown each on who gets to the wedding first. Your coming in will make the pool seven and sixpence.'

'You impious scamp!' I yelled at him—the words jerked out of me rather than shouted. 'Don't you remember that this is Sunday? Stop it, stop it, I implore you—if not for the safety of your neck, at least for the welfare of your future. I decline to ride a steeplechase for a bet on Sunday.'

'You are mistaken,' he had the cheek to reply; 'Friday is Sunday in Turkey. You've got the week all shaken up and jumbled within your mind through your frightful horsemanship. Get a stick and come along, or you'll be left behind.'

Fortunately, I hadn't a stick, and the two reckless beings forged on ahead, disappearing into the laby-

rinth which is called Suadiyeh, where, I am glad to say, they lost themselves, and arrived last; for no man without a guide can find his way to any particular place in such an irregular maze as Suadiyeh.

Bad as were the roads across the fields, they were as nothing to the streets of Suadiyeh itself. It must not be supposed that this place was a town in the ordinary sense of the word. Every house in it is surrounded by a quantity of land varying from 10 to 100 acres, and so the settlement is scattered all over the landscape. This place is only about 10,000 years old; therefore they have had no time to attend to the roads yet. Vehicular traffic is impossible, and thus the eternal fitness of things is exhibited, because in this district there are no vehicles: all transporting of goods or men is done on the backs of horses, mules, or camels; consequently, the highways are very narrow—a great saving in expense. The roads are constructed in this way: on each side a deep ditch is dug, and the earth thrown in a long ridge, which looks like a relief map of the Alps, between the two waterways. Sometimes this ridge of mud-mountain is soft, and then the horse sinks up to the knees, hurrying that one leg may not be so irretrievably stuck as to be irrecoverable. Some-

times, however, the horse does not pull the hind-leg out of the earthen vice in time, so, after a short struggle, it recognises the situation, and lies down in the mud, murmuring 'Kismet.' Then the rider gets off with some care, so that he may not be stalled also. He fetches a piece of timber, and, getting a firm footing if he can, belabours the horse, persuading it that further effort is necessary. There is no Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in that region, or for the prevention of cruelty to human beings, either.

Once, when the horse and I attained a summit in this range, we found ourselves confronted by a ditch which joined the two longitudinal watercourses, and thus we were at the edge of a frightful precipice. This was in the most populous part of the village—the centre of Regent Street, as you might call it. The horse thought he should go down to the ditch, along a narrow, knife-like ridge. I imagined it would be safer if he took the valley between the two ridges. I forgot for the moment that the horse had been longer in that neighbourhood than I, and that, besides this, he was incomparably wiser. Accordingly I pulled him round to the valley, while he clung resolutely to the ridge, turning his head, however, in

obedience to the rope, and thus his calculations and himself were upset. Disaster followed so quickly that I am not exactly sure what happened, but the net result was that the horse went down in a heap and I was flung clear across the ditch to the peak of the Matterhorn opposite. I picked myself up, he picked himself up; and one at each side of the watercourse gazed reproachfully at the other.

'This street is but indifferently paved,' I remarked. The horse made no reply, but looked as if he thought the fault was mine, which indeed it was. Two of the foot-walkers, who had been keeping up with us, nimbly hopping from one side of the ditch to the other, now approached and began to belabour the unfortunate horse, instead of bestowing their efforts on me, the one immediately at fault, or cursing the Pasha who had stolen the money collected to build a bridge. I persuaded them to desist, and so, elevating me on the horse again, the patient and good-natured animal scaled the opposite height, and thus we resumed our journey. In each of the ditches rapid water flows, coming from a river in the hills, and every farm along the road deflects a quantity of this water by means of little side-trenches for irrigation. The country seems to be lavishly fertile, and

we were riding between plantations of figs, of olives, of oranges, and of lemons, with miserable little hovels interspersed among them, for no man dare build a decent house, otherwise the officials would loot him. They will loot him in any case, but he stands a better chance of saving something if he lives meanly and wretchedly.

Chapter XII

A Greek Homestead—The Second Day of the Wedding—An Appalling Band of Music—Solemn Hilarity of the Natives — Western Dancing introduced amidst Applause — A Dramatic Arrival—Vive la France!—Some Matters for England to consider.

At last we came to the homestead of the Greek merchant whose guests we were to be. He was, I imagine, the most considerable man in the place, and his residence and its surroundings proved very interesting to us. A pair of temporary flagstaffs had been set up at the gate, and a Turkish flag fluttered from the top of each. The gables of the long row of houses ended at the side of the ditch by the road. These formed granaries, stables, and so forth; abutting on them came the residence, part of which was two stories high, with a prolongation of one story; then, at right angles to that, dining-rooms, sleeping-rooms, kitchen, and so forth, all on the

ground-floor—the building forming a gigantic letter L, with a broad veranda looking out on a stone-paved court; while the two-storied building had the usual upper gallery, reached by an outside stairway. Into the courtyard clattered the unique procession, and instantly all was a scene of bustle, chatter, and apparent confusion. Our host, who welcomed us, was a tall, fine-looking old man, with a gray moustache and smoothly shaven chin. He wore a costume that seemed a compromise between European dress and Greek and Turkish garments; on his head was a marvellously embroidered skull-cap with a tassel on it, something similar in make to the usual red tarbush, yet with a difference which indicated that his nationality was not Turkish. Several stalwart sons stood behind him, including the bridegroom, and farther to the rear a multitude of relatives and guests. The old man led us up the outside stairway to an upper room, which had a carpet on the floor and a cloth-covered couch extending around the four walls, but was destitute of any other furniture. Here most excellent coffee and some sweets, which I did not venture upon, were brought in, and we were introduced to the Greek Archbishop, a dignified ecclesiastic, with headgear

like a silk top-hat turned upside down. It was rather an embarrassing conclave, for we had no common language by which we could communicate with each other. I, at length, was not sorry to escape from this formal gathering, and mingle with the crowd down in the courtyard. From there I wandered alone into the grove of orange-trees, each tree laden with fruit temptingly ripe. At the foot of the garden I discovered a picturesque little water-mill, where the torrent, deflected from the ditch by the roadside, turned with great speed a most primitive water-wheel. This wheel gave motion to a large millstone which revolved on the floor of the little building spanning the stream, and two attendants squatting there threw handfuls of grain into the hole at the centre of the mill-stone, the result being a coarse brownish flour which was piled in an ever-increasing heap on the flags of the pavement—a granular meal, warm to the touch after the grinding.

I wandered about the estate, coming to the banks of the little river from which the irrigating water was drawn; and this stream barring my progress, I worked my way along its bank until I came to the road. There was no bridge at the road, merely a ford, for everybody of consequence going that way

would certainly be on horseback; and as for pedestrians, it mattered nothing if they got their feet wet—the foot-passenger is of no account in Syria.

The red sun was approaching the blue line of the Mediterranean, which we could see on the distant horizon; therefore, anxious not to be caught out in the dark on such roads, and having some knowledge of the malarious nature of the swamp which we must traverse before reaching the vessel, I hurried to the house of the Greek merchant, that I might urge the others to begin the return journey, if they had not already gone. I found, somewhat to my dismay, that the horses had all been dismissed, and that we were expected to stay the night at the residence of our host. There was nothing for it but to acquiesce. I suspected it would be a difficult matter for a stranger to make his way through the bewildering labyrinth of roads to the port, but was not aware at the time that, even if he could do so, he would not be permitted to wander about the country without a military escort, for which he was expected to pay. I thought yearningly of my familiar and comfortable room on board the steamship, for, as many of the guests assembled were from a distance, I knew they would have to be accom-

modated somewhere, and I could not comprehend exactly where we were all to be packed. However, this was an experience which the steamship company had not promised us when we set out, and so we all resolved to make the best of it. As evening drew on and the lamps were lit, we were invited to a great oblong room on the ground-floor. This apartment was uncarpeted, and along three sides of the room ran the usual couch-seat covered with rugs. On the fourth side, where the door opened to the courtyard, stood a long bench, and in one corner a table on which were placed various bottles and glasses. In the corner by the table sat the venerable Archbishop, the object of great deference on the part of everyone who entered the room. Distinguished guests were taken up and introduced to him; others, less favoured, had to content themselves with silent devotion from afar. The apartment was soon crowded, with the exception of a space behind the table. Up to this time, we had seen no sign of any woman about the place. The measured tap of an approaching drum was heard, and some of the guests, in anticipation of the delight which this signified, kept time with their feet to the rhythmic beat of the ever-increasing sound.

At the farther end of the room, cross-legged and silent—a pair of immobile statues having nothing to do with what they were to witness—sat the two soldiers who had escorted us from the port, their guns with them, and their belts of cartridges showing the dull, elongated bullets like regular rows of teeth, giving the bandoleers in the gloom an ominous semblance to the misplaced jaws of a grinning skull —the death's head at the feast. The measured drum-beating increased in volume until the band came into the courtyard, and then there was a blare of discord, a prolonged tattoo on the drum, and a squeaking wail like that produced by bagpipes emptying the wind out of themselves in one prolonged note. A cheer went up from the assemblage, and great applause greeted the entrance of the band. This musical organization consisted of three pieces. One little man played a sort of flageolet. He was followed by a taller individual who had a bag of wind under his arm, and a long wooden instrument that seemed capable of emitting only one vague note of a droning bagpipey nature. The drum was of great circumference and of very little depth, and its operator played it with a stick that looked like a Red Indian war-club. This was plied with much

energy by his right hand. His left, remaining on the left edge of the drum, held a slight switch that punctuated, with little chattering taps, the energetic sonorous battering of the war-club; thus the performer got from his instrument the double effect of a bass drum and a kettle. With a resounding thwack on the big drum, the members of the band seated themselves along the bench near the door; behind them was a broad low window without glass, at which aperture on the outside were clustered numerous no-account people, servants and the like, who filled the courtyard, but were not permitted to enter the spacious oblong room in which we were gathered. However, the open door and window gave them the full benefit of the music, and so later on dances were inaugurated in the stone-paved courtyard. The band was given a glass of red wine all round, and then the drummer mounted the bench, his head almost touching the ceiling. He settled his formidable instrument in front of him, the other two men contenting themselves with standing on the floor. It was an exceedingly go-as-you-please band, each of the three doing his best without any reference to the efforts of the others. The flageolet-player worked himself up into a sort of frenzy, rapidly

moving the further end of his instrument, as if trying to write his name in Arabic in the air. He was the spectacular member of the troupe, and threw himself into various postures, sudden and bewildering, his fingers working all the apertures of the flageolet with a speed and dexterity that I have never seen equalled. The music was of a wild and piercing nature. Whether it was any particular tune or not, I never learned, but it seemed to be composed on the spot, the man extemporaneously acquiring some one weird strain and playing it over and over again, in remote likeness of the *Leit-motif* in Wagnerian opera. Number two worked the windbag, industriously pumping away at it with his moving elbow, his extended cheeks fit to burst; yet all his efforts produced simply one droning note that formed a sort of acoustic background for the brilliant musical gymnastics of the man with the flageolet. The drummer paid no attention to either of them, but swayed his war-club with an energy that showed he was resolved to earn whatever fee was going to be paid him. The room palpitated with a pandemonium of sound.

After the preliminary flourish of the band, the overture, as it were, to the night's hilarity, the

dancing began. This function was a most solemn and stately performance. Several of the young men got upon the floor, linked arms, and set foot to a measure which seemed to consist of a step forward, some hesitating steps backward, forward again, and backward, all motions very slowly taken, the group in a straight line swaying gradually round like a military company on parade. The band played frantically, the man elevated on the bench doing his heroic best with his war-club to beat in one end of the drum, while his switch kept up a constant clatter, like rain on a roof, athwart the other disc. The dancing, like the drumming, disclaimed all connection with the music; and although the enthusiast on the flageolet, swinging his instrument up and down and backward and forward and round and round in the air, sometimes paused in an outburst of strenuous ear-piercing melody to gaze up toward the ceiling, or, with his eyes closed and his head thrown back, increased the speed of his piping, yet through the rush of the notes or during their temporary cessation the solemn dance went on, as it began, without acceleration and without rest. A great contrast to the exuberant energy of the flageolet-player was the man with the wooden trombone at

his lips and the bag of wind under his arm. He kept his instrument pointed steadily to the floor, and drew now and then enormously long breaths, while the wind-bag kept the continuous droning deep note going without a break. Dogged determination and no flourishes was *his* motto.

When one relay of dancers unlinked arms and dissolved, another took its place upon the floor, the music going on in the interval without abatement. A picturesque addition to the fraternity of dancers came gravely forward—four men, all of a size, dressed exactly alike, who seemed to be retainers of the family, or to hold an undefined sort of intimate relationship with it, for they had something to do with the welcoming and placing of the arriving guests. Each wore a long enveloping garment that descended from the neck to the heels, remotely like an English country labourer's smock. This robe was of Pompeian red, gorgeously embroidered on back and breast, braided with yellow and other colours. Around each waist was tied a looped scarlet sash, whose tassels fell from the knot at the side nearly to the ground. These four men put their arms over each other's shoulders, and in the dance that followed moved as one person.

Presently there entered a little boy of six or seven years, the youngest scion of the house. He walked from the door straight to the spot where the Archbishop was sitting in his corner, bowed his head, touched forehead and breast with the tips of his fingers, dropped on one knee, and raised the prelate's hands to his lips. In like manner, with sober ceremony, he greeted each of the guests, omitting only the obeisance of the knee.

It is not considered etiquette in those parts for strangers to content themselves with being mere lookers-on, as such an attitude suggests criticism; so we were invited to join in the dance. It was proposed that we should give them a sample of something Western, and having with great difficulty succeeded in suppressing the band for a moment, so that we might hear ourselves speak, we formed a masculine quadrille on the floor, one of the number substituting chin music for the instrumental, and calling out the figures in the intervals of his chanting. Our movements were watched with great interest by all present, they never having seen anything like this before—nor had we either, to tell the truth, for remembrances of our younger days were extremely hazy, and we got sadly mixed up in the evolutions.

However, the audience took it all as part of the game, and applauded vociferously, especially when we got ourselves tangled up in an apparently inextricable mix. The flageolet-player, who could not be restrained for long, began to tootle tentatively at the melody which our leader was rendering, and presently advanced so far as to give a wild mountainous arrangement of the tune; and this gradually involved the droning machine, and after awhile the drummer; so our vocalist ceased his efforts, and confined himself to shouting, 'Salute your partners,' 'All promenade,' and sentences of similar import. And as we endeavoured in a measure to keep step with the constantly increasing pace of the flageolet-player, the dance soon resolved itself into a wild demoniac saturnalia which it is impossible to describe. It became a competition between the musicians and the dancers, resulting in a contest that elicited the wildest enthusiasm. When we dropped to our seats exhausted, the music coming in triumphant a good ten lengths ahead, one of our number (I mention no names; it is not my place to incriminate anybody), finding that the band, if once it could be quieted, was susceptible to Western influences, whistled a Scottish air to the flageolet-

player, who speedily began to give a tolerable rendering of it. The drum and the drone *would* chip in, of course, and they rather made a hash of the pibroch; but nevertheless our unnamed comrade, dressed in knickerbockers, gave the Highland fling, with the tossing of the hands, 'Hoch!' and other exclamations that accompany this exhibition of terpsichorean art. The display figuratively and almost literally brought down the house.

It was about eleven o'clock at night when the ladies, in procession, entered the room, headed by a tall, stately grand-dame with gray hair, who was the mother of the bridegroom. The bride's family seemed scarcely represented at all at the festivities, if we except the sister of the bride, who acted as one of the bridesmaids. The bride was a very pretty girl of eighteen or thereabouts, most marvellously costumed with head-dress and gown—which I shall not venture to describe, so elaborate was her toilet. With the exception of the grand-dame, none of the ladies took part in the dancing.

At this point our captain arrived, and was received with great cordiality and cheers from his passengers, who were alike devoted admirers of his navigating skill and of his social qualities, in spite of the fact

that he was a man who never touched strong drink, or even wine. Nevertheless, no friendly gathering of the passengers was ever considered complete without him, for his genius in telling a good story and his singing of 'Marching through Georgia,' 'Little Annie Rooney,' and other ballads was simply not to be excelled. The uniforms of the captain and the doctor, who accompanied him, seemed in the opinion of the gathering to give a semi-official character to the proceedings which was deeply gratifying to all there assembled. And now came the culminating dance of the evening: the old gentleman, our host, who looked like Marshal MacMahon, took the floor with his wife, and the band fairly outdid itself in clamour and clash. I thought the last days of the drum had assuredly come, but it stood the bombardment like an impregnable fortress. The old lady and gentleman bowed to each other with slow rigidity of deportment, and began a sort of minuet, which was incongruously leisurely when compared with the cyclone of music that devastated the room while it was going on. The captain, well informed in the customs of the place, poured out a glass of wine for the lady and a small nip of brandy for the gentle-

man. Balancing one goblet in either hand, he faced the dancing pair, keeping step with them, advancing and retreating, and finally with a low bow, after crossing and recrossing the hands that held the brimming glasses, presented one to each.

It was nearing midnight when the last guest arrived, entering upon the scene with a dramatic effect which Sir Henry Irving would have found himself baffled to reproduce. Never off, or even on the stage have I seen a more picturesque figure. He was a French journalist from Antioch, four hours away. News spreads with amazing rapidity in these parts of the Turkish Empire, where anything like a newspaper is sternly suppressed, and the rumour had come to Antioch that the wedding festivities at Suadiyeh were to be graced by the presence of strangers of eminent distinction from England. Rumour could not say positively that the Prime Minister was to be one of our number, but it did us the justice to claim that our rank was scarcely inferior to that of the high official named. Consequently, the enterprising journalist had flung himself upon a horse, and had come in the darkness over the frightful road which severs rather than connects Antioch and Suadiyeh. He was a correspondent

of some Parisian paper whose name I now forget, and well did he uphold the honour of his journal in that remote section of the world. He was dressed in wide top-boots of polished black leather that reached above the knee, and into these boots the terminations of his trousers were thrust. A velvet coat, covering, but not concealing, a most marvellously embroidered waistcoat, added distinction to his figure, which, unfortunately, was slightly under middle size. A broad turned-down collar encircled his neck, displaying much of it, and giving to the young literary man a most imposing Byronic look; but the triumph of his striking outfit was the necktie. This was of the finest white cambric, and projected on each side of him to the limit of his broad shoulders, being at least twelve inches wide at each end, and having somewhat the appearance of a pair of gigantic wings, misplaced by having slipped round from the back to the front. He wore on his head an excessively broad-brimmed black felt hat of the Buffalo Bill style of architecture, from which depended an enormous plume; and when this was removed, it displayed a voluminous quantity of glossy black hair, evidently untrimmed for ages, thus giving him the appearance of a latter-day decadent poet of the minor

variety. Why Fate had decreed that such a striking and interesting figure should be wasting itself here in the wilds of Syria, rather than receiving the homage due to it on the boulevards of Paris, I do not know; but after a startling clatter of iron-shod hoofs on the stone causeway outside, exactly the proper preliminary to a crisis in the sword-and-buckler drama, this vision loomed suddenly before us, framed in the doorway. He stood at the portal for a moment until the dance was completed, and the stage, as one might say, cleared for his entrance; then he took two or three rapid strides forward, big spurs jingling at the heels of his great jack-boots, and, flourishing his hat aloft, he brought it round with an airy undulation to his breast, just under the enormous butterfly necktie. He snapped his heels together with a military click, bent his body until it formed a right angle—heels to hip, perpendicular; hip to shoulder, horizontal—and with one imposing sweep of the hat, whose dependent plumes lightly kissed the floor—an all-embracing brandishing of headgear that appeared to include everyone present in its courtesy—he stood once more erect before us, struck an attitude, hat in hand and knuckles on hip, like a most graceful actor, who seemed to say, 'I have come; behold me!'

It was all done with such superb swagger, such an instant occupying of the whole place, that we burst out spontaneously with hearty applause, as if Cyrano de Bergerac himself, or Monsieur d'Artagnan, had unexpectedly honoured us with his presence. Dear me! what a dull, uninteresting world this would be if it were not for the French! He graciously waved aside the glass of ruby wine proffered him, poured out instead a measure of brandy—the drink for heroes—and, saluting courteously bride and bridegroom, the mother and father of the happy man, the bridesmaids, and finally greeting the rest of us with a rapid glance of his eye, he tossed it off at a gulp—as a man should, if he can. Small as was his stature, his inimitable air of gracious consequence seemed to fill the entire room, bringing to the rest of us a true realization of our own insignificance.

Later I had the honour of some conversation with this gentleman, compassed under linguistic difficulties, for his English was rather shop-worn, and my French was worse; but, nevertheless, I may honestly say that his presence there gave me some idea of the vast importance of, and deep consideration that should be awarded to, the pen. Oftentimes had that man prevented disastrous war—had smoothed away

misunderstanding and settled diplomatic entanglements which had proved too much for the minds of the greatest statesmen in Europe—merely through a few explanatory lines written from Antioch and published in his paper in Paris. I have his own assurance that such is the case, and I see no reason whatever to doubt it. I regret to say that his opinion of Lord Salisbury — who, he was somewhat disappointed to find, was not of our number—proved the reverse of flattering; and although I did what I could to say a few words for his lordship in his unavoidable absence, I saw that I made no impression upon the Frenchman, who had the affairs of the world at his fingers' ends. I tried to shift the conversation to American politics, but he waved America aside as he had waved aside the glass of wine. It was a country of no importance whatever, he informed me, and so I had to let it go at that. On the strict quiet, and not to be mentioned elsewhere, I learned that France would soon be the possessor of Syria; while if England objected—well, she would simply get smashed. I implored the young man to allow me to give England some hint of its impending destruction, so that it might walk warily, and, if possible, postpone the day of reckoning; for, with all

her faults, Britain has some qualities which, despite the drawbacks of the race, might be worth preserving to the world. The young man refused to admit any mitigating circumstances, but jauntily gave me permission to sound a note of caution to the doomed people, although he frankly warned me that it would do no good, because of the incomparable stupidity of the British Government. It was deplorable that Lord Salisbury should not have been with us, because the young man assured us that, had such been the case, he would have told him quite fearlessly how things were drifting. However, I place these facts before the British public, and if they choose to ignore them that's their own look-out. I, at least, have done what I could.

Chapter XIII

No Breakfast — Visit to a Mission — Attempted Voyage to Ruined Seleucia—Descent of the Turkish Army upon us—Rebellion of the Doctor—Marching through a Swamp—In the Hands of the Military Authorities.

An Eastern house is all bedrooms should circumstances demand an extension of sleeping accommodation. Having had all the hilarity I could stand for one night, and feeling sleepy, I was taken into a large room on the ground-floor, upon which had been spread half a dozen mattresses side by side. There were no bedsteads, but mattresses were lying on the floor ready to be rolled up again in the morning and put away, when the room would resume its ordinary uses. Each mattress was well provided with bedding, and there six of us slept till morning.

I arose shortly after daybreak, and seemed to be the first of the guests afoot. Coming out into the

courtyard, a servitor approached me with a watering-can in his hand and a towel thrown over his shoulder. Here, as he poured the water from the can into my open hands, I refreshed myself at this animated washstand, and rubbed myself dry with the towel he presented to me. After this a small cup of hot coffee was given to me; and knowing that Eastern hospitality does not include the providing of a breakfast, and that we should have to forage as best we could for our morning meal, I wandered out into the orchard and helped myself to a few ripe oranges from the trees. When all of our party had arisen and washed themselves, the horses were brought once more into the courtyard; the two soldiers, who never left us, mounted to their perilous pinnacles, and the captain, leading the procession, gave the word that we should drop round and pay a visit to the Rev. Mr. Dodds, with whom he was well acquainted.

The house of Mr. Dodds is situated on an elevation giving a wonderful view of Suadiyeh and the Bay of Antioch beyond. To reach it we had to go down along the bed of a stream and up its precipitous bank, ascending a road that was even worse than that we had traversed the day before. I was thrown off my horse only twice in reaching the mission

station. Mr. Dodds is from one of the Western States—Indiana, I think—and his mission is supported from America. He preaches on Sundays, and is the head of the schools during the rest of the week, where Turks, Greeks, and Armenians are welcomed alike. The house is strongly built of stone, and has a wall around it enclosing an acre or two of land—a wall like that of a fortress, which, should occasion require it, can stand a siege. Notwithstanding the elevation of the situation, it is scarcely less malarious than the valley. A mission-post in this region is not one to be desired as a salubrious residence. It requires no small amount of heroism for a civilized and educated man to exile himself with his wife and children in such a spot, practically cut off from communication with his kind. If any books or papers are to reach him, they must be smuggled in. Mr. Dodds is a subscriber to a London newspaper, but he rarely receives it; in fact, next day, when we were in prison at the port of Suadiyeh, I came across, in the Custom-house, a pile of newspapers which had been intercepted, and the leaves of which were being used as spills for lighting the pipes of the Turkish officials—which purpose the journal answered exceedingly well. Mr. Dodds said his wife and two

children had been there for something like six years —in fact, the children were born there—and all suffered more or less from malaria.

Leaving the mission, always accompanied by our military guard, we made our way to the port, which presented a scene of bustling activity. Numerous porters were carrying on their backs sacks of wheat, which they dumped into barges, to be thus conveyed out to the steamer. The wind was still blowing toward the west, which made it pleasant for the loaded barges going out, and unhappy for the galley-slaves who rowed them home.

In giving up our teskeries and passports to the Turkish authorities in Suadiyeh, we had sought permission to visit certain places of interest in the neighbourhood, as our ship was going to stay a day or two in the Bay of Antioch. We understood that such permission was granted, but such seems not to have been the case. The probability is that the Turkish authorities did not comprehend our request any more than we did their supposed granting of it. The chief antiquity we desired to investigate was the ancient city of Seleucia, whose ruins occupy a portion of the coast slightly to the north of where our steamship was anchored. No one lives in this city now,

but the remains are considerable, and there is to be seen a great cutting through the solid rock, something over two-thirds of a mile in length, which Polybius asserts to have been a road that led from the city to the sea, but which is supposed to have been an aqueduct for carrying away the sudden overflow of the river, whose turbulent coming down from the mountains often threatened the safety of the town. The ruins are interesting from the fact that Seleucia was the ancient port of Antioch, and from this harbour St. Paul sailed for Cyprus (see Acts xiii. 4, as the guides about Jerusalem would say). But there is little use in my trying to describe the place, for I never saw it. The Turkish army prevented that.

There were two methods open to us in visiting Seleucia. The most roundabout way was to go to the port of Suadiyeh in a boat from the steamship, and, taking horses, guide, and military escort, proceed through the swamp for about five miles to the northward, when Seleucia would be found at the foot of the mountains. The most direct route was to put off in a boat from the steamer and row directly to the ruins, which were no farther away from the steamship than was the port of Suadiyeh; thus we

should save a horseback ride, which none of us, after our experiences of the day before, were hankering after. Four of us then made a request to the captain for one of the ship's boats, and the first question Captain Campbell asked was, 'Have you permission from the Turkish authorities?' We told him quite truly that we had; but it seems the authorities expected us to row a mile up the Orontes to the Custom-house, and then make our journey to Seleucia, which, as I have pointed out, was a long and troublesome way round, but, as after-events proved, infinitely shorter than the plan we adopted.

The storm of the day before had completely cleared away, and it was as lovely an evening as a man could wish to enjoy when the sailors lowered the boat for our accommodation. Four of us—Edward Standing, H. W. Eastcott, S. L. White, and myself, all passengers—got into the boat, and we were accompanied by the ship's medical officer, Dr. H. W. Pritchard. It was by the merest chance that I went with the party, for in one of my numerous fallings off from the horse the day before I had cut my hand on some of the tin ornaments that decorated the second saddle, and a bandaged hand is of little use at an oar.

The companion of my travels to Damascus and other parts of Syria was an invalid in a measure, taking the voyage for his health's sake, so we two stood at the top of the ship's ladder, and asked each other whether we should go or not. I shouted down to the young men in the boat that, as my hand disabled me from rowing, and I could not be of any assistance to them, I thought I would stay on board the ship. They answered that they wanted some lazy men to steer, and asked us to come along. Thereupon the invalid and myself descended the steps and entered the boat.

The distance proved to be longer than it looked from the ship's deck. On the low shore near the foot of the mountain was a square white building with a dome on it, one of the many tombs in which St. George is buried; for he also enjoys deserved rest, after his encounter with the dragon, in a grave at Beyrout—and, unless I am misinformed, in many other places. Be his real place of repose where it may, I steered for this tomb, as did the British army for a similar sepulchre in Omdurman; but we did not succeed in making our expedition quite as successful as did the Sirdar's troops, all on account of not having our Maxim guns with us. I scanned the

coast through a pair of glasses, scrutinizing the rocks, which were illuminated by the level red rays of the setting sun, but could find no trace of anything like a ruined city. We were perhaps two or three hundred feet from the fine sandy beach which lines the shore near the tomb, and, as the sun was just touching the waters of the Mediterranean, I said to the crew that I thought it was too late to visit this land beyond the tomb that evening. In this they agreed with me, and I began to put the boat about. No sooner did the craft veer to the west again than there ran up hurriedly from behind the white tomb three Turkish soldiers, who came down to the water's edge in a fine state of frenzy. The first to reach the strand dropped on one knee, levelled his rifle at us, and in the still air we heard plainly the click of the trigger as he cocked it. The other two runners did not make such a record of speed as the first, for they kept their rifles continually to their shoulders as they came, ready, apparently, to fire if we showed signs of rowing away from them. As we had come in peace, not in war, to Turkey—emulating young Lochinvar—none of us, I think, had any desire to act as targets for the perfection of Turkish military marksmanship.

'It will be some time before we can row out of range, and, while doing so, the chances are that one or more of us will get winged; therefore I propose to go ashore, as they seem very much to desire our company,' I remarked to the crew.

This was agreed to. The doctor meanwhile, holding up his cap and pointing to the gilded three feathers, the badge of the Prince line, told the soldier that we were peaceable citizens, while I stood in the stern, my right hand aloft, and, like Davy Crockett's coon, said, 'Don't shoot; we'll come down.' As the keel grated on the beach, the soldiers, with a recklessness which would have cost them something if we had been real invaders, flung their rifles on the sand, rushed into the surf, and pulled the boat up, as if fearful that even then we should attempt to escape. One or two of us had some thoughts of securing these rifles when we sprang ashore, but we realized that these runners were merely the advance guard of the Turkish army, and so it would have been useless for us to resist, especially as we thought the whole thing was a misunderstanding which would be cleared up the moment we saw the officials at the Custom-house. As we neared the shore, we saw a fire spring

up high in the mountain to our right, followed shortly by a second, a third, and a fourth. Answering these signals, similar fires flamed out across the valley from the mountains to our left. I called the attention of the rowers to these illuminations, as their backs were toward them, and 'The Boy' remarked that they looked like the bonfires on Jubilee Day. If we had had an ounce of sense amongst the lot of us, we should have known that these were the warnings of an invasion which the sentinels in the mountains had observed, and that we were the invaders; therefore we should have tacked about and got back to our comfortable ship. However, there is this to say for us, that we were all modest, unassuming persons, possessing nothing of that sense of importance which fortified our French friend of the night before, and so it never occurred to us that we were going to put the whole Turkish Empire into a furore before we had finished with our adventures. The question which excited the Turkish soldiery, who had not been happy till they got us, and now did not seem to know exactly what to do with us, was whether they should attempt to march us through the swamp to the Custom-house, or wait where they were till reinforcements came up.

It is amazing how we managed to understand each other, having no common language. The soldiers were in a fearful state of excitement, shaking their rifles in our faces and talking all at once. We five stood around with our hands in our pockets, and agreed that we had got ourselves into some kind of a mess; but I told my comrades it only meant tramping three miles or thereabouts to the Custom-house, and then everything would be put right—in which expression of opinion I was entirely wrong. Then someone proposed that we should show the soldiers our Turkish teskeries, which we did; but this exhibition had no effect upon them. Finally they ordered us to leave the boat and march. The doctor said that he would not leave the boat; he was in charge of the ship's property, and refused to budge, advising us not to go, either, unless they called a cab. So saying, he sat down on the prow of the stranded craft, pulled out his pipe and lit it. The soldiers stormed and levelled their rifles at him, but he sat there quite imperturbable and smoked, making no further remark. We all resolved to stand by the doctor, but the trouble was that darkness was coming on, while our friends on the steamer had no notion of the difficulty we were in, and we had no means

of giving them warning. Finally, as one method of settling the deadlock, I proposed that three of us should march with the soldiers to the Custom-house, and that the doctor and another should row the boat round to the same spot, accompanied by the third soldier. I had no desire, with night approaching, to stay longer in this malarious spot, especially as two of our party had taken the trip for their health, and not for the purpose of catching any of the justly celebrated fevers which were prevalent in that district. The soldiers finding all their threats in vain, and probably not feeling justified in going to the length of shooting us now that we had given ourselves up, finally agreed to the proposition. The boat was shoved off, the doctor and Mr. S. L. White, the most stalwart rower of the expedition, got into it, while a Turkish soldier took my place in the stern, his rifle held under his arm covering our two comrades.

Seeing them fairly started on the Mediterranean, I asked the remaining soldiers to be good enough to lead the way to the Custom-house, and with that we started off. The level plain which we had to traverse was in places marshy and cut up with ditches and lakes filled with stagnant water. The

reeds and other vegetation growing luxuriantly in the swamp were in some places as high as our heads, and so we trusted to the soldiers to guide us to the port. Darkness, however, had now set in; we saw the liner's light glimmering out on the bay, and finally heard the shriek of her siren, calling us to return, for she was to sail as soon as we got back. I tried to get one of the soldiers to shoot off his gun, hoping that perhaps its report might give those on the steamship some idea of our predicament. The soldier, however, could not, or would not, understand, and seemed to think that I was scheming to wheedle his rifle from him. He held a most serious view of our case, taking his stand apart with cocked rifle and warning us not to come near. I think it was 'The Boy' who touched the gun off. Anyhow, it went bang with a sharp click, and sent its bullet up in the air, but the sound it made seemed too much like the crack of a whip to be able to carry far even in the still, starlight night. It turned out afterwards that someone on board the ship heard the shot, but did not connect us with it in any way. We came to a lake, and had to make a long détour. Finally we discovered that these soldiers, coming down from the mountains, did not

know their way at all, and I saw that they were not taking the right direction for the Custom-house. Accordingly, I assumed charge of the party myself, having had some experience in my youth with the Red Indians in finding lost trails; and without wishing to boast of my proficiency at all, I may say that I brought the party safely to the Custom-house, the soldiers with great docility following my lead. On our way to the port we met a dozen more of the troops out in search of us, and an animated conversation ensued between them and our captors, the latter seemingly recounting our desperate resistance.

Arriving finally at the Custom-house on the banks of the Orontes, we climbed the one stair that led to the outside balcony, and so entered the room overlooking the river. Here we found, smoking a cigarette, our old friend, the quarantine officer. He was a most charming man from Constantinople, to whom we had all taken a liking during our previous visit, and we confidently produced our papers for his reinspection; but he shook his head with an air of mitigated melancholy, and gently waved the documents aside. He spoke French fluently, and so we had little difficulty in making known our plight to him. He asked us to be seated,

offered us cigarettes all round, and said that he was sure everything would be all right whenever the authorities came to appreciate the innocence of our expedition. Unfortunately, he had not the right himself to release us, as we had been arrested by the military power.

Chapter XIV

Under Arrest—Arrival of the Commandant—A Mohammedan Prayer—Protest of the Captain—Black John, the Interpreter—The Great Luck of the Doctor—The Turkish Soldier not fitted for the Navy—The Truculent Kaimakam.

We seated ourselves on a bench, and warmed our cold hands over the brazier that stood on the floor near the quarantine officer's desk. This dignitary explained that he expected the military commandant every moment, and that, when that officer arrived, he would explain the case to him. Meanwhile, the two soldiers who had accompanied us stood, one on each side of the doorway, with hands crossed over the muzzles of their guns. About an hour later the military commandant came in. I glanced at my companions in dismay, and saw by the expression on their faces that the hope of a speedy acquittal had fled with the advent of the newcomer.

The commandant was the most forbidding-looking man I have ever seen. He had a bullet-head, surmounted by closely-cropped gray hair; a hard and cruel face, with determined mouth and chin; a low, receding brow that gave evidence of about as much intellectual equipment as we might expect to find in the head of a baboon. His small, ferret-like eyes never turned our way. If I were a painter who wished to draw a picture of the instigator of an Armenian massacre, I should like this military officer to stand as the model. He sat down on the bench beside the quarantine officer and drew out his book. The quarantine officer began to tell him about our case, but the military man waved his hand for silence. A servant came in, took off his boots, and substituted slippers; then, departing, he reappeared bearing a great water-pipe, with a coil of rubber tubing wrapped round it. Unwinding this, the officer inserted a mouthpiece, while the servant fetched a coal from the brazier and placed it on the tobacco. And there we all sat in silence while this man grimly smoked. When the tobacco had been burnt out, a cup of coffee was brought in, which he sipped leisurely. The servant in the interim had taken the pipe away, bringing it back refilled with tobacco, upon which

he placed another live coal from the brazier, and the coffee being finished, the officer went on smoking as before. I should be accused of exaggeration if I estimated the number of pipes that man smoked during the time we were in his clutches. He simply puffed away incessantly, except when he was drinking coffee or praying. All this time no questions were asked us, and no notice whatever was taken of our presence. At last, after half a dozen pipes, the military man made a quiet remark to the quarantine officer. The latter got out pen and paper. No Turk that I ever saw writes upon a desk, but upon a loose sheet of paper held in the hand. A long despatch was dictated and set down in Arabic. Then a soldier was called, the paper was sealed with a seal that dangled at the military man's belt, and the important document was sent off by a mounted messenger. The military officer now took out from the sash that swathed the middle of his body a string of amber beads, and began nervously to separate them in threes and twos, twos and threes, smoking all the while. The quarantine officer seemed dejected, but, seizing an occasion when the other was not looking, he surreptitiously passed a cigarette to each of us. He smoked them constantly himself, and

doubtless regarded them as mitigators of all human ills.

The roaring of the steamship whistle had now ceased. Heretofore, every five minutes or so we heard the shrill scream and constantly-rising inflections of the siren, or the low, hoarse bellow of the ordinary steam-whistle, which echoed back and forth from the mountains like the rumble of distant thunder. As the commandant was evidently not going to volunteer any information, I made so bold as to ask the quarantine officer what the state of the game was now. He shrugged his shoulders, and said the matter was entirely out of his hands; a despatch had been sent to the kaimakam, and when that gentleman gave his decision we should know whether we were to be free or not.

'Is the kaimakam a military authority?' I inquired.

'No,' replied the quarantine officer; 'he is head of the civil administration of this district.'

That, at least, was pleasant. We seemed to be out of the hands of this bullet-headed military man, who sat smoking and counting his beads. I asked the quarantine officer how long it might be before he heard from the kaimakam. He answered that

it would be two hours before the messenger could return. Hereupon he offered me another cigarette, and said, in a tone of mild expostulation :

'I am very sorry for you, but I wish you would not ask me any more questions. I have really nothing to do with the affair.'

After a long silence the servant of the military commandant came in with a prayer-rug, which he spread on the floor of the room, taking some care that it pointed toward Mecca; then, salaaming to the commandant, he again retired.

The military man got up in silence, took off his slippers, bathed his feet, removed his coat, gave some finishing touches to the rug, which was apparently not quite accurately placed; then, facing Mecca, he began to pray. A Mohammedan prayer is long, and requires many evolutions. The hands go up above the head, and are spread out to receive the blessings of Allah; then they are rubbed down the head and sides, so that the blessing may permeate the body. The knees are stroked up and down to signify humility; the man kneels, mutters a number of prayers in that posture, bows, knocks his forehead against the prayer-rug, kneels, stands up, kneels again, knocks his forehead, and so on, while all the

time he is muttering the lines written for him by Mohammed.

While this was going on the captain of our ship entered, to our great delight, followed by his interpreter John—a black rascal with only one eye, but with a thousand tongues, for he spoke a smattering of every language that is uttered upon the face of the earth. I saw at a glance that the captain was angry clear through, and away out beyond on the other side.

'What's the meaning of this?' he demanded of the quarantine officer, who shrugged his shoulders, shook his head, and offered the captain a cigarette; but as the latter does not smoke cigarettes, I took it.

The helpless quarantine man pointed to the praying military commandant, as much as to say, 'He has charge of the case; make inquiries of him.'

Gloomy as was our condition, hungry and cold as we were, the interview between the captain and the military commandant will always remain in my mind as the most comical encounter I have ever beheld on earth or sea. The captain was too full of bitter resentment at the moment to appreciate it, but his thorough earnestness merely added point to the situation.

'Look here, my friend,' he cried, 'will you stop those genuflections and tell me why you have arrested my passengers?'

The Mussulman went steadily on with his devotions without paying the slightest attention to the inquiry. The captain strode round to the other side of him, and every stride the captain made, his black interpreter, a deep frown on his brow, took step after step behind him. Reaching the port side of the gymnastic Mohammedan, the captain continued sternly:

'How long do you propose to keep these men here? Do you understand that my ship is being detained, and that I hold you responsible? What did you arrest them for? What did you think they were doing?'

The motions of the living automaton facing Mecca went on as calmly as if there had been no interruption; the muttered prayer came forth neither slower nor faster than before; the forehead rapped the ground the regulation number of times, and the praying man took no notice of the demands made upon him. The captain executed a semicircular détour, and came right in front of him, the one-eyed man following his leader like a shadow. The

quarantine officer, with a deprecatory smile on his fine face, offered each of us there seated a cigarette, which we took.

'Do you understand the seriousness of what you have done?' cried the captain, standing in front of this working model of devotion. 'Do you understand that you are illegally detaining an English ship? Do you understand the consequences of such an unwarrantable action? It is an outrage—an outrage on my passengers and on my ship.'

The military man understood nothing; he continued his devotions undisturbed, as if no one had been within a hundred miles of him; and although the captain perambulated around and around him, trying to reach some vulnerable point at which his appeal might penetrate the ears and engage the attention of the devotee, his efforts were useless; the commandant continued his prayers until they were finished. Then he got up, put on his slippers, crossed his legs on the bench again, resumed his coat, and called for another pipe of tobacco, without ever casting a glance on our irate chief. The quarantine officer apparently dared not interfere in the matter, and the military man absolutely refused

to speak, even when the captain let loose upon him the forbidding-looking interpreter.

Luckily, the captain, with a thoughtfulness that called down blessings on his head from all of us, had brought with him from the ship a napkin-covered basket filled with sandwiches, and from a pocket he abstracted a bottle of fine old Scotch; so we gratefully munched our sandwiches, imbibed the spirits with moderation and water, and listened to the account the captain gave of the doctor's adventures, which had a comic element in it that did much to cheer the monotony of our position.

When our two comrades got into the boat at St. George's tomb, the Turkish soldier covering them with his rifle, Dr. Pritchard resolved to row slowly through the darkness until they should have lost sight of land, and then head the boat so that they might pass near enough to the ship to shout and let the officers know our predicament. But when he turned the boat's head a little too far out into the bay, the soldier, with a motion of his gun, ordered him to keep along the shore—and a request emphasized with the muzzle of a loaded rifle usually inspires respect, as was the case in this instance. The command of the soldier, however, proved his

own undoing, for although it was a mild evening, with no sea on out in the bay, yet near the shore there were some breakers, and the boat rocked viciously. The quick eye of Dr. Pritchard speedily recognised what was coming as he sat facing the soldier. It was not too dark to notice that a greenish tint was beginning to take the place of the sunburn on the warrior's visage. There was a wild gleam in his eye, as he began to experience internal sensations to which he was entirely unaccustomed, for probably this was the first time he had ever been out in a boat, and the man feared that he was attacked by some new and malignant type of cholera. The gun dropped from his nerveless hand, and in a few minutes the doctor had on board that boat one of the most desperate cases of sea-sickness that the Turkish Empire has furnished since navigation began. As the man's head hung over the gunwale in dire distress, calling at intervals upon Allah and the Prophet to come to his aid, the doctor leaned forward, grasped the muzzle of the abandoned rifle, and dragged it toward the bow under the forward seat. They had now before them merely a very sea-sick and entirely unarmed person.

'Pull to the ship!' cried the doctor; and pull for the ship it was.

The whistle was booming in the air, and the captain had become alarmed for the safety of his passengers; but the bay was so calm that it seemed impossible any disaster should have happened to them. He imagined that they had gone too far afield, and so kept the whistle going to remind them that he was anxious to be off for Beyrout.

'Ship ahoy!' shouted the doctor, as they brought the boat alongside. 'Send down somebody here to pick up a section of the Turkish army, who is very ill.'

Two sailors came down the ladder, and between them they hoisted the limp figure of the Turkish soldier to the deck, where some brandy was given to him, which brought speedy recovery from his disquieting malady. The doctor followed the passenger up the ladder, and told the captain of our fate. So, taking the interpreter and a crew with him, the captain got into the boat and rowed for Suadiyeh, where we were detained. The doctor and his comrade thought quite rightly that they were safer on the steamship than fooling around the port to which we had been taken; and so they remained on board.

As the captain finished telling us the entertaining story of the doctor and his patient, there was a commotion along the gallery outside, and in came the kaimakam. I had hoped that the head of the civil authority would be something like our quarantine officer; but, alas! such was not the case. He was as stout as Falstaff, with an Arabian abbieh about him so similar to the one I had bought at Damascus, that if I had not had the garment on myself I should have thought it was the same. Around his prominent corporation was wound and wound a broad sash. As he came swaggering in, it seemed to me that here in life was the typical Turk as drawn by Sir John Tenniel in *Punch*. I had seen his exact portrait dozens of times on the cartoon page.

He was scowling frightfully, and evidently quite puffed up with the importance of the case, which already he looked upon as most serious.

He hadn't the brains of a jackdaw, either; and so I was quite prepared to see this incompetent cumberer of the earth do exactly what he did, which was to treat the stupid military man with much cordiality, and frown at the quarantine officer, who was a man of enlightenment and civilization. With great pomposity he took a seat at the side of the

commandant, pulled out the document which had been sent to him, read it over to the commandant, who had previously dictated it, and each of them nodded their heads gravely, as if here at last had been discovered an act of the most devilish conspiracy ever hatched against the peace and quiet of the Turkish Empire. He ordered us up before him, and, glancing along our silent line, snorted contemptuously, and waved us to our seats again. Then he shook his head, and the commandant shook his head also. It was quite palpable that they considered our misdemeanour a crime of the gravest importance. The mild quarantine officer gave us plenty of silent sympathy and cigarettes, but it was increasingly evident that he had no jurisdiction whatever—the other two did not even consult him.

As the pair were whispering together, the captain, with John the interpreter, confronted them. Black John of the sinister eye was a character the like of which is probably to be found nowhere else than in the Levant. He was bold as a lion when backed by the captain with the might of Great Britain behind him; but ordinarily he cringed to the Turkish official, as do all underlings in the dominion of the Sultan. He was reputed to be the greatest liar

along the Syrian coast, but that probably is flattery; and, although he is doubtless talented in this direction, his right to the supreme title may be open to dispute in a country so superbly gifted in mendacity. We came to know him later as 'Backsheesh,' for he was a most unconscionable beggar, who tried to convince us that he had saved our lives by terrorizing the Turk, and seemed resolved to collect the full value of each man's existence from him, soliciting backsheesh whenever he met one of us. At first we felt deeply grateful for his intervention, and such interpreting as he was able to do, and so among us we got up a purse for him; but he came to each of us later with his trousers pockets turned inside out, showing a great hole torn in the lining, asserting that he had lost all the money we had given him, and so made a private collection from each. This attempted tax-gathering he repeated as often as possible, murmuring gently 'Backsheesh!' in our ears whenever we met him; so we began to think it would have been cheaper if the Turks had executed us on the spot.

A study of John's demeanour to the kaimakam was most interesting. The military officer, I may remark, during all the time of our incarceration,

never acknowledged our existence by a word or a look, nor did he answer any question that was put to him. He seemed to think that we were unworthy of the slightest notice. Black John prefaced every remark he made in English with the phrase 'I want,' probably an abbreviation of the Americanism 'I want to know'; but more likely the two words represented his own insatiable desires, for the mottle-faced, one-eyed man always wanted something.

'Ask the kaimakam,' said the captain, 'how long he is going to detain these men.'

Black John drew himself proudly up, put a fierce glare into his one eye, and fastened the same on the stout kaimakam, shooting forth the question in voluble Turkish. The kaimakam, with many indignant gestures, replied in the same language, and the moment he began to speak John seemed to wilt perceptibly. It probably occurred to him that, while the captain would depart, the kaimakam would remain, and so it was well to stand in with both powers. He therefore delivered each question with the supremest hauteur, as if he entertained the greatest contempt for the kaimakam; but he received the answer with grovelling deference, as if after all

the kaimakam were a great man. John translated to the captain the kaimakam's replies.

'I want,' said the black man, 'why these men come here.'

'Tell him,' said the captain, smothering his indignation as well as he could, 'that they had every right to come here. They delivered up their papers to the kaimakam himself at this very table. They asked, and received, permission to do what they did. Tell him that they have not only passports from their own country, but that they possess also Turkish teskeries—permission from the Sultan himself to visit this place; and tell the kaimakam that he will have to answer to Stamboul for this detention.'

John, with emphatic gestures that were an exaggerated imitation of the captain's own, delivered this message to the kaimakam, and, bowing low as he received his reply, he translated it to the captain.

'I want why these men not coming to the Custom-house? Why they go in small boats and try go back on coast. What they expec' for do?'

'What did they expect to do?' cried the captain; 'they expected to land at Seleucia to visit the ruins of that district, which, as I said before, they had permission to do. Tell him that.'

The kaimakam looked at John with incredulous amazement when this was explained to him. I heard him cry 'Antiqua, Antiqua?' several times in unbelieving tones.

'I want,' translated John, 'no man so big fool go see Antiqua where nobody live. He say you are liar. I want why this man have Turkish abbieh is disguise?'

'There is no disguise about it,' replied the captain; 'he has as much right to wear that abbieh as a kaimakam has. It is absurd to detain men on such a pretext as this. They found no arms on the persons of the men and no arms in the boat. Tell him that, and ask him to let them go. Tell him also that the ship is being detained; we have been ready to sail for the last six hours, and I shall hold the kaimakam responsible if there is further delay.'

The kaimakam had been gradually lashing himself into a fury, and now he stood up, with his arms waving like a windmill, trying to browbeat the captain, and roaring out what seemed to be the most deplorable language.

'What is agitating him?' asked the captain. 'What is he talking about? What is he saying to me?'

'I want,' said John, 'you take your ship and go. He not detain ship; he not care where ship go, and not care you not come back here again. He spit on English ship; you go, me go, where like; these men here in prison.'

The kaimakam, sitting down again, absolutely refused to hear anything more from the captain or his interpreter. Probably neither kaimakam nor military officer could write, for they called the quarantine man to their assistance, and between them they dictated a long despatch, which was sent off to the telegraph-office, that had been kept open because of the importance of our arrest.

Chapter XV

Thrown from Military into Civil Custody and back again—An International Mix-up—Dramatic and unexpected Incoming of the Pasha—'Let them be shown at once to a Dungeon Cell'—The Turkish Empire is perturbed—A Messenger to Antioch—The British Flag doesn't flutter—Sailors want to fight—Release at last.

ONE of my comrades now made an attempt to persuade the captain to return to his ship and sail for Beyrout, where she was due next morning. There was a week's work ahead of her at Sidon and at Jaffa loading oranges, and by that time we thought we might be liberated and have a chance of catching her before her departure for England. The captain, however, stanchly refused to budge. He asked John to find out if there were any authority superior to the kaimakam to whom we might appeal. It was learned that there was a Pasha who outranked both the kaimakam and the military officer, but he

was stationed at Antioch, four hours away; and as it was now midnight, there was no possibility of hearing from him before eight o'clock in the morning, for the officials refused to telegraph, saying the office was open at this hour for the convenience of the Government only, and not for the reception of private messages. Telegraphic communications were now flying between Antioch and Suadiyeh, and each despatch that came in seemed to stiffen the backs of our detainers, to judge by the complaisant nodding of these two incompetent asses, who were utterly incapable of distinguishing between an act that was really serious and an inoffensive excursion by three or four harmless individuals, unarmed even with a jack-knife. I could not help thinking that Turkey was badly served by her minor officials. Here was a perfectly simple case which would have been disposed of in two minutes by either English or American minor officials, yet these jackdaws were cooking up an international crisis, which, if they knew anything at all of foreign affairs, would inevitably result in their own discomfiture. We learned that they had telegraphed to Antioch and then to Aleppo, and that now Aleppo was in communication with Constantinople; the whole Turkish

Empire being thus thrown into entirely unnecessary commotion over five men in a boat. Toward morning it seems that an order came from Constantinople to hold us at all hazards, and to call out as many troops as were needful for that purpose. They probably imagined we were a gang of desperadoes armed to the teeth, who had set about the conquest of Syria. When this confirmation of the action of the kaimakam and the military officer came, they nodded to each other wisely, and frowned upon us sitting on the bench. The kaimakam rose, looked at the military officer, drew his abbieh closer, and appeared about to depart.

'Ask him what he intends to do,' commanded the captain.

John stepped in front of the departing kaimakam, who withered him with a scornful glance that travelled from his blind eye to his big feet; then he roared something which John translated.

'I want,' said John, 'these men go to prison. It is order from Stamboul. You and your ship go where like. The kaimakam send you not to prison.'

At this point came the dramatic moment of the weary night, seeming more like a climax on the stage than a reality of everyday life. The silence

was suddenly broken by the rattle of musket-butts against the floor of the balcony outside. The wide hanging veranda was lined with troops, and the courtyard was occupied by a small standing army —so frightened was the kaimakam that we ruffians would make a dash for liberty and thus annihilate the imperial forces. Immediately after this salute of the gun-butts there appeared in the doorway a fine military-looking man with a cloak over his shoulders, having very much the bearing and semblance of a natty French officer. The guards on either side of the door saluted, and the fussy importance of the stout kaimakam dropped from him as if he had flung his abbieh to the floor. The newcomer entered swiftly, cast a quick, eager glance around the room, curtly acknowledged the obeisance of all present, ejaculated a brief question to his subordinate military commandant, which I interpreted to be :

'What's all this fuss about ?'

We instantly knew, without being told it, that here before us stood the Pasha whom we had thought to be in Antioch. As a matter of fact, he had come that evening unexpectedly to Suadiyeh, and, although staying at a house two miles away, heard a rumour of what had happened at the port,

got on his horse, and reached us about one o'clock in the morning. If he had arrived some hours earlier it would have been lucky for us. I never saw a man who got so quickly at the marrow of a thing as did this Pasha, if Pasha he were. I use the term without being at all certain of its accuracy; whatever his official title, the man was chief, seemingly, of both the civil and military authorities in the Antioch district. He was, as I have said, a fine-looking man with an abrupt military manner. A heavy black moustache covered his upper lip, and his black hair was closely cropped. There was firmness, decision, and intelligence in his face; and if the Sultan has many officers of this calibre, and knows how to use them, he is to be congratulated. The praying person began mumbling an account of the affair, while the Pasha looked us over, apparently coming to the conclusion that we were no marauders, for he interrupted his subordinate, strode over to where we three were sitting disconsolately on the bench, and shook hands with each of us. Then saluting the captain, and speaking admirable French, he asked for his version of the complication. Thus, hours after the arrest, was the first inquiry made for our side of the story. Turning to me, he said:

'You allege that three of the soldiers levelled their guns at you. Is that true?'

'Certainly,' I answered.

'Can you pick these men out from the squad?'

'I think so,' I replied.

A number of soldiers were marched into the room, and I had no difficulty in selecting the three who had held us up. These men the Pasha made stand forward, asking them if they had done this thing. The soldiers, who had hitherto been so truculent, now began to tremble, and, if it were possible with such complexions as they had, to turn pale. The Pasha angrily rated them, had their weapons taken from them, and marched them off, seemingly under arrest like ourselves. Then he sat down, and heard the account of the affair from the kaimakam and his subordinate, saying nothing during the recital, but interjecting the exclamation, 'Puh! puh! puh!' exactly like an automaton wound up to produce this sound at stated intervals. Before this he had sent to the telegraph-office for the original despatches that had been forwarded, and when they arrived he perused them with great interest, throwing up his hands in despair at the close. He then turned on the kaimakam and the praying man, and gave them

his opinion of their actions in terms which I surmised were far from complimentary. The kaimakam turned green and yellow, and his knees actually shook beneath him. The military subordinate's stolid face betrayed no emotion; he took his tongue-lashing with the air of a man resigned to the buffetings of fate. The Pasha then called in the assistance of the mild quarantine officer, and wrote a long despatch, with which a messenger fled to the still open telegraph-office.

'I am very sorry, gentlemen,' said the Pasha, rising and saluting us, 'but this affair, through the muddling of two fools, has assumed proportions that are beyond my grasp. I dare not release you, because authority greater than mine has sent word that you are to be held—evidently under a total misapprehension, brought about by the despatches received from this incapable kaimakam. I have just sent in a report of two hundred and fifty words which puts the occurrence in its proper light; but until a command comes from my superiors, it is impossible for me to let you go. Our facilities for promoting the comfort of our guests in this place are not extensive; but I have given orders that you are to have anything you want in the way of eatables from the ship,

and your imprisonment will be made as mild as it is possible for detention to be. I hope that early in the morning a permit for your release will come.'

Then, turning to the captain, he said:

'I am very sorry for all this; but you understand, of course, that we do not detain you or the ship at all. You are at perfect liberty to come or go as you choose. I am told that you assert we are detaining the steamer, which is not the case; we have nothing to do with her.'

'I beg your pardon,' said the captain, 'but you evidently overlook the fact that your soldiers seized my steamer's boat. They dragged it ashore, took it out of the hands of my officer, and put it in charge of one of your men. When you lay hands on my boat, you lay hands on my ship—and so let us have no mistake about it. Aside from that, I stand by my passengers; you put them in a cell, you put me in a cell.'

The Pasha shrugged his shoulders, made some inquiries from his subordinate regarding the capture of the boat, then shrugged his shoulders again, and bade us good-night.

The kaimakam and the man of prayer held a whispered conversation together, and then sneaked

out of the room in company like a couple of whipped dogs. The sympathetic quarantine officer, offering us once more cigarettes all round, led the way to a room adjoining the apartment where all this had taken place. Here there was a kind of an apology for a bed, and a kind of an apology for a bench. The two windows on opposite sides of the room had most of the glass out of them, and the cold wind whistled through in an exceedingly chilly and uncomfortable manner. There was barely room for one man, not to mention four; but we made the best of it, and lay down where we could. Yet, little sleep came to any of us that night. Two soldiers tramped up and down the balcony outside until daylight.

Captain Campbell shared our discomfort, in spite of our urging him to go back to his ship. In the early morning he aroused one-eyed John and the boat's crew, who had rested for the night in an outhouse underneath us, and sent them to the ship for something to eat and drink. The returning boat brought the best breakfast I have ever yet had the pleasure of eating, for our appetites were in a fine state of sharpness, and the food was delicious. The ship's doctor had the courage to come with the boat,

although he knew that by doing so he laid himself open to arrest, but luckily no one recognised him as a member of the company of five who had been taken the evening before.

It was a lovely morning, and after breakfasting I resolved to test the strictness of our imprisonment. A soldier paced the balcony opposite the door of our room, another stood with his rifle beside him at the head of the stair, and on the bottom step sat a third with his rifle over his knees. Here and there over the courtyard, crouching under the shelter of the low sheds, were grouped other soldiers, who had lighted fires and were boiling their coffee. Their arms were stacked in clusters, or placed leaning against the walls of the shed. The number of troops gave the place the appearance of being under siege. I passed the guard at the door and the one at the head of the stairs without being molested. Seeing me descend, some of the soldiers in the courtyard took up their guns as if to be prepared for emergencies. The guard at the bottom of the steps growled a little as I stepped over his rifle, but he did not stop me. I walked to the bank of the river, and then a soldier detached himself from one of the groups and followed me, keeping rather sheepishly

some way behind, his rifle over his shoulder, with the air of a man who didn't exactly know what was expected of him. Probably because of the action of the Pasha the night before, an idea had permeated the troops that a mistake had been made, and they were in some doubt as to what the correct attitude was in the circumstances. I tramped this man over a good section of the Turkish Empire, up and down the river, and to the borders of the swamp. His vigilance relaxed a good deal during this promenade, and he dropped farther and farther behind, seeing I made no attempt to escape. Some little distance up the river there is a four-sided enclosure, with mud walls about ten feet high. It seems to be a market square, and has an arched entrance through each of the four sides. The southern wall faces the river, and the other three walls border on the swamp, which is a thicket of rank vegetation, and an excellent place for a man to hide in if he were so minded. When I came to the southern entrance I suddenly bolted in, darted through the western exit, and worked my way round to the south side again. I caught a glimpse of the coat-tails of my guard flying in through the entrance by which I had disappeared. Coming softly up behind him, I saw

him standing there within the enclosure, his jaw dropped, and his rifle levelled, cocked, and held on the alert. The man, not knowing which way I had fled, was looking in a bewildered manner from one of the three exits to the other. I slapped him heartily on the shoulder, and said:

'Here, old man, you'll have to guard me a little better than this, you know. I don't want to get lost or mislaid through *your* neglect of duty.'

The soldier smiled, and then laughed outright. He was a very genial fellow, and all in all proved to be one of the most satisfactory gaolers I ever possessed. We came back to the courtyard together, and he even allowed me to take his rifle in my hand and examine it. It was made by the Martini and Peabody Company, of Providence, Rhode Island, U.S.A.

I imagine my man told the rest of the company the adventures we had on our tramp together, which account they received with a good deal of hilarity. They hospitably offered me coffee, which was excellent, and by-and-by I got a squad of them together, and put them through the American drill, which I had learned when a member of a light infantry company in the United States. Although

my language must have been an enigma to them, they proved amazingly quick in the 'uptak,' as the Scotch say. All their fierceness of the night before had gone, and they were the most genial, alert, obliging set of men I had ever been thrown among. Before half an hour had passed they were going through their evolutions in an admirable manner, while the onlookers against the wall entered thoroughly into the spirit of the game, and applauded heartily when anything in the drill took their fancy. The kaimakam had arrived, but all his former cockiness was gone. A deep gloom enveloped him as completely as his Arabian cloak. He stood leaning on the balcony, watching me give instructions to the soldiery, but he did not interfere. However, all my interest in the reorganization of the Turkish army speedily vanished when I saw a messenger gallop up, spring from his horse, and mount the steps. I dismissed my squad, and hurried after him. I expected this was the order for our release. The kaimakam, who was exceedingly subdued, opened the telegram with an impatience that almost exceeded our own. Although I don't know to this day what that message said, yet its purport was quickly gathered from the changed demeanour

of the kaimakam. All his old truculence and sense of importance returned. He gave an order to the guard, and when next I attempted to descend the stairway I was stopped; we were confined to the barracks once more. The devotional commandant perused the despatch, and although he showed none of the elation the kaimakam had exhibited, it required no interpreter to tell us that the decision at headquarters had been against us, and that the telegram which the Pasha sent the night before had not produced the effect he anticipated. The Pasha had probably received some intimation of this, for, although he promised to be with us early in the morning, we never saw him again.

We tried to turn black John upon the kaimakam, and discover what our position was; but that official now refused to have any communication with us. He motioned John indignantly aside, and made contemptuous gestures toward us. Evidently Richard was his old swaggering self again, and even one-eyed black John seemed to lose faith in us. Meanwhile, the populace from the country round about had poured into the courtyard, and stood staring up at us as if we were some interesting variety of wild animal captured in the swamp. The kaimakam

ordered us into our cell, and there we sat moodily, without even the consolation of a cigarette from the quarantine officer, who was as dejected as ourselves over the turn things had taken.

Select groups of the Sultan's subjects were allowed to come up the stairs on the balcony, and peer in at us through the broken windows. They shook their heads solemnly, quite plainly wondering why the authorities allowed such wretches as we to pollute the sacred air of Syria. The kaimakam swelled bigger and bigger as he tramped up and down the balcony outside our door, stamping his foot now and then, and muttering to himself.

It was at this interesting stage of the proceedings that the Rev. Mr. Dodds came in upon us. He could both speak and write Turkish, and so, with all the energy of an American, he took our case in hand. He said there was not the slightest use in telegraphing to anybody, because the despatches would not be delivered until it suited the convenience of the Turkish officials. The only thing to do was to get a messenger off to the British Vice-Consul at Antioch as speedily and as quietly as possible. The captain, whose movements were not interfered with, got pen, ink, and paper, and wrote out a statement

of the case in the simplest, tersest English I have ever seen used in a document. Meanwhile, the clergyman had secured a messenger, whom he mounted on his own swift Arabian horse. The man was to receive one mejedeh for taking the captain's letter to Antioch, which seems a small price for such a long journey. Although the messenger had been deeply indebted to Mr. Dodds for various favours in the past, yet that gentleman did not entirely trust him. He told us that, if the money were paid down, the chances were that the envoy would ride a mile or so, tear up the letter, wait the requisite number of hours, and then return and say he had delivered it. So the clergyman, on the outside of the envelope, wrote in Turkish to the Vice-Consul as follows:

'Please pay this man one mejedeh on delivery of this letter, and charge the same to me. He should reach you by two o'clock, and I shall be obliged to you if you pay him one piastre for every ten minutes he saves under that time.'

The sealed letter was given to the messenger with the foregoing inscription in Turkish on the outside of it. Mr. Dodds asked the man to read what he had written, and inquired if he understood

it. The messenger understood, and started off at a gallop.

The hours passed somewhat wearily, the monotony broken, however, by a very excellent lunch that came from the steamer. It was about four o'clock when the messenger returned from Antioch, having made remarkably quick time. He brought a letter from the Vice-Consul, which said that probably the order for our release would reach Suadiyeh before the messenger, as the Vice-Consul would at once see the authorities, and if they proved obdurate would immediately communicate with the British Consul at Beyrout. It was evident, however, that the authorities had proved obdurate, for although the messenger had been several hours on the way no telegram had come to the kaimakam, who was strutting about as objectionably as ever.

About this time some one of the party began to think yearningly of the British flag. An Englishman, no matter where he is, has great faith in the British flag, and can scarcely be made to believe that in times of peace any country will take the responsibility of firing upon it. It was then proposed that a boatload of British sailors should be sent for from the ship, bringing with them a Union Jack

at the prow and another at the stern; that we should hand to the kaimakam a written protest against our further detention, and march to the small boat under the protection of the British flag, taking the chance of the Turks firing upon it. Of course, if they did fire we should be helpless, for we had to row a mile down the Orontes, a shallow and uncertain stream whose banks were patrolled by Turkish soldiers; so, if they took pot-shots at us, they would have a comparatively easy target. Mr. Dodds wrote the protest in Arabic, and it was handed to the kaimakam, who treated it with the utmost scorn, while from the balcony we presently saw the white boat lowered down the black side of the steamer, and, with a Union Jack at stern and prow, we watched the craft coming steadily towards us. Mr. Dodds had not implicit belief in the efficacy of the English flag. He begged us not to attempt embarkation until he had seen the Pasha, who still remained at Suadiyeh, although he put in no appearance at the port. The clergyman mounted his Arabian horse and galloped off to interview the Pasha, and the flag-decorated boat drew up at the shore of the Orontes under the gable end of the Custom-house.

The boat's crew comprised half a dozen sailors of

as fine and manly a type as could be found in all the British mercantile navy. The boys gave a cheer when they recognised us on the balcony. The silent reply of the dogged military commander was to draw up a squad of soldiers where they commanded the boat, and as the men took their places we heard the 'snick, snick' of the cartridges being placed in the rifles. Somehow, I felt that the Turkish bluff was just a little better than ours, and was going to carry the day. Unless the Union Jack were bullet-proof, I didn't think it would be wise just then to trust to its protection. The sailor-boys, however, were just bristling for a fight. They had wanted to take with them at the prow of the boat the steamer's saluting cannon, filled to the muzzle with canister, but the chief officer would not allow it.

Presently we saw Mr. Dodds galloping back, waving above his head his white silk scarf, one of the products of that part of the country. We hailed this with jubilation, thinking it a sign of surrender, but as a matter of fact it was the very opposite. The clergyman implored us not to take the risk of embarking. The Pasha had told him that the commandant dare not let us go until he had orders to do so. The Pasha said that if he himself were there he

would be compelled to give the word to fire on us ii we attempted to escape, much as it would grieve him to do so; and there was no doubt that the devotional commandant, who had quite evidently no liking for us, would give the command to fire with alacrity. The guards had become so interested in the arrival of the boat that they had slipped away from their posts to watch it, and, taking advantage of their absence from the balcony and the stairs, I stole quietly down and made my way along the walls to the place where the boat was moored. The sailors hailed me with enthusiasm.

'I say,' cried their leader, 'aren't you coming aboard?'

'I'm afraid not.'

'Why?'

'Why? Well, because this isn't our day to get shot. We prefer being shot to-morrow.'

'This mob would never dare shoot at you under the British flag. They haven't got the courage. I know this lot; they can't shoot. We've fought 'em at Constantinople and all along the coast different times, and licked 'em hands down. I say, ain't you goin' to let us have a shy at 'em?'

My dear fellow, you couldn't do anything; you

have only your bare fists, and there are but six of you; while there are more than a hundred soldiers here, all armed with breech-loading rifles.'

'Don't you make any mistake, sir,' said the sailor emphatically. 'You just get the captain to give the word, and we'll clean out this mob in two minutes, and dump old Stick-in-the-mud in the river on top o' the lot. Arms! bless your soul, we don't need 'em. We'll have their arms inside ten seconds after the first whoop, and we're not afraid of their shooting. I tell you, sir, in five minutes after the first shout, if you want a Turkish soldier, you'll have to hunt for him in the swamp. Why, we've met this sort o' cattle before.'

'Yes, sir; yes, sir!' cried two or three of the others eagerly; 'they looks big, but they ain't nothin'. Every time we're ashore in Turkey we have a shy at 'em, an' they've never hurt us yet, guns or no guns.'

At this point the guard came up, and, touching me on the shoulder, ordered me back to prison.

'Don't you go, sir!' cried an angry sailor. 'He touched you on the shoulder, so that's an assault. If you'll swear to it that he hit the first blow, I'll dump him in the creek. So, you just say the word.'

'Oh no,' I replied; 'this man and I are old pals.

We have been touring round the country together, and he isn't a bad sort of chap. I don't want to see him hurt.'

And so, to the intense disgust of the sailors, I followed my gaoler up along the balcony once more. The sun went down on our wrath into the Mediterranean, and darkness came on, before the message arrived which set us at liberty. The kaimakam was so disappointed that he departed in a huff, without giving any notice to our guards that we were not to be molested further, so we had some little difficulty before being allowed to enter the boat. The trouble was smoothed over by Mr. Dodds, who read the telegram to the soldiers and explained to them that further opposition was useless. The guards, however, would not allow us to pass until their chief corroborated Mr. Dodds' statement. The commandant could not bother about any such triviality as our liberty, so he got his prayer-rug out once more, and was going through his devotional evolutions; we had therefore to wait until the commandant finished his prayers, and then he sullenly gave orders that we were to station a man with a lantern at the prow of the boat, and this light must be kept waving up and down until we got out of the river and across to the

steamer. A company of soldiers went along the banks of the Orontes abreast of us, with instructions to hail us at intervals, and if we did not reply they were to fire. Thus the commandant seemed to persist in his belief that we desired to land at some point along the coast, whereas our only anxiety was to take leave of that part of the country as quickly as we could.

Twice going down the river they hailed us, and the man at the prow kept his lantern waving industriously.

Thus ended our little episode at Suadiyeh. It was, all in all, an interesting experience of Turkish officialdom. We had passed through the hands of four officers of different grades, civil and military. Two of these were sensible men, who saw at once that we were innocent tourists with no designs whatever against the empire; but the common-sense of these two was nullified by the dense stupidity and fanaticism, and I think I may with truth add corruption, of the kaimakam and the man of prayer. Looking back over the incidents, I am convinced that, as Pooh Bah says in the 'Mikado,' these officials might have been squared. I am certain now, from the kaimakam's dramatic indignation, and his abuse

of the captain, that he expected to frighten us so that we would turn over to him all the money we possessed; in fact, the morning after our capture, when the thing had gone too far, and the kaimakam began to be afraid he had put his foot in it, his attendant came to me, and said reproachfully:

'Why didn't you offer backsheesh to the kaimakam?'

There was one little pathetic touch which will long linger in my memory. In the morning, when it was very cold, the quarantine officer, taking advantage of the absence of the kaimakam and the military commandant, ordered his servant to prepare a brazier for us. The brazier consisted of a flat metal pan about two feet in diameter, which rested on a sort of three-legged stool of metal. This pan was piled full of wood out on the balcony, and a fire kindled. The attendant crouched beside it, working away with a fan on the blaze, while the smoke poured forth in the still air. When at last the smoke ceased, and the wood in the brazier had become a glowing bed of coals, he hauled the three-legged stool into our cell, and the result, as the advertisement has it, was grateful and comforting on a chilly morning. I was sitting alone in the cell,

with my hands spread over the glowing coals, when the quarantine officer entered, closed the door behind him, and sat down opposite me, also spreading his hands in the radiated warmth. He looked across at me, with a faint, apologetic smile on his kind face, and, tapping his breast, said mournfully:

'No home; no madame.'

These four words seemed to exhaust his stock of English, but in the circumstances they drew a graphic picture that many sentences could not have equalled. It was a little attempt at consolation. His manner and tone seemed to indicate his sorrow at the inconvenience to which we were put, and his words expressed as plainly as words can:

'You see that what you have to suffer for a few hours I have to put up with month after month. In this wretched place I am compelled to live. Be thankful, then, that your case is not so deplorable as mine.'

I shook hands with him across the brazier. He was a man and a brother—a sympathetic gentleman.

Chapter XVI

Tales of the Syrian Coast—The Biter bit—How a British Man-of-War was terrorized—The acquiring of Coal for the Turkish Navy—The American Cruiser Captain who did not talk the Language, yet managed to make himself understood—'The Gods of the Christians have come'—The Little Old English Lady.

ONCE, when I was employing my spare time editing a magazine, I induced various celebrated 'Litery Gents' to contribute to its pages a series of stories under the general heading, 'Tales of Our Coast,' which collection afterwards made a book that was published on each side of the Atlantic with success. If a man who could write would journey up and down the margin of the Syrian sea line, he might lay in materials for tales of the coast which would be interesting, but which doubtless would not be believed.

One cannot fail to notice the helplessness of the

ordinary inhabitant when confronted with the official Turk. Even the most prosperous merchant goes in abject fear of the officer, and would no more think of questioning his acts or interfering with them than he would attempt to direct the course of a stroke of lightning, or manage one of the numerous earthquakes that terrorize the district. The moment the hand of arrest was upon our shoulders, everyone in the district shrank from us as if we had been lepers. I expected that some of the many friends we had made at the wedding would at least put in an appearance, and perhaps say a word on our behalf; but they held aloof, and gazed at us from afar, shaking their heads as if they had been taken in previously, and had no idea we were the desperate criminals that official action proved us to be. They were evidently amazed at the courage of the missionary who came so promptly to our rescue, and identified himself with us. When the native is arrested, he simply grovels at the feet of the kaimakam, weeps and rubs his brow against the dirt, and buys himself off as cheaply as he can. He knows that the question of his guilt or innocence will cut no figure whatever in the proceedings which follow, and he is equally well aware that when judgment is pronounced

upon him no appeal to a superior authority will be of the slightest avail. He does not expect any friend to intervene on his behalf, as such intervention would do no good, and would merely transfer the resentment upon the interloper, who was meddling in matters that did not concern him; besides, he knows that he himself would not interfere, even if his dearest friend had become involved in the official toils. The native therefore cannot understand a prisoner acting as if his soul were his own, and refusing to prostrate himself before the all-powerful kaimakam.

On the second day of our detention it became rumoured through the crowd, which came from far and near to gaze at us, that we were at least three potentates in disguise, otherwise we never would dare to carry ourselves as if we had no particular respect for his majesty the kaimakam. This induction was doubtless confirmed by our ultimate release, and the knowledge, which it was impossible to conceal, that no backsheesh had been added to the store of that virtuous official.

The following story was told to me as having occurred in a district not very remote from that which we honoured so long by our compulsory

presence, and it is a beautiful instance of the biter being bit:

A native had made a profitable deal in goats, which had been taken by him to Jaffa and sold there, to be sent up to Jerusalem at the time of a Russian pilgrimage, goat-flesh being the chief food of the pilgrims during the time they remain in the vicinity of the Holy City. The man had made something like two thousand mejedehs, and one of his neighbours saw this money paid over to him in Jaffa. When they both returned, the neighbour went to the kaimakam, and said he had seen *one* thousand mejedehs paid to the goat-keeper, and suggested that, if some charge were trumped up against the man, the informing neighbour would visit him in prison, and get him to disgorge the coin, trusting to the generosity of the kaimakam for his reward.

The goat-keeper was immediately thrown into prison on the charge of having committed a murder that had occurred in the mountains some time before. He was naturally panic-stricken, and, after remaining a week in gaol, the neighbour was allowed to visit him and tender him advice. The neighbour said that the kaimakam had complete proof regard-

ing the murder, but he himself had learned that if *two* thousand mejedehs were paid to the kaimakam the prisoner would be released. The accused swore he had no such sum at his disposal, and his neighbour, with a sigh, advised him in that case to commend his soul to Allah, for his execution would be only a matter of days.

The doomed man then urged his supposed friend to remain with him, and finally told him where the two thousand mejedehs were concealed. The traitor took the money, kept half of it himself, and gave the other half to the kaimakam, who returned to the informant fifty mejedehs or thereabouts. The ruined man was then released, and he went to the kaimakam, hoping thereby to get back a portion of the money. He being a liar also, as many of them are in that district, swore that he had given the neighbour *three* thousand mejedehs.

The kaimakam was naturally indignant on learning that he had received but a third of the supposed haul, and he no doubt bemoaned the untrustworthiness of human nature. He promptly put the conspirator into prison, charging him with the same crime as that of which the first man had been accused. Before the informant got out of gaol, he was com-

pelled to endow the official with the thousand mejedehs he had stolen from the goat-keeper, and had as well to collect another thousand mejedehs of his own to bestow upon the kaimakam. He was thus one thousand mejedehs worse off than before he meditated his treacherous design : a state of affairs that may fail to enlist our sympathy—which will perhaps be extended to the original victim, who got back none of his hardly-earned money.

The ignorance of the ordinary subject of Turkey regarding geography or international conditions is not to be wondered at when it is remembered that the Koran is practically the only text-book in the schools ; and, however valuable it may be as a volume of precepts and religious sayings, it can scarcely be expected to take the place of maps on the wall or historical books in the hands of the children. But it is amazing that men of common-sense, as the majority of the natives undoubtedly are, cannot recognise an absurdity when they see it.

They believe that the Sultan rules the whole earth, and, merely out of his good-nature, allows the Queen of England and the President of the United States to carry on their small affairs. While the Turkish official understands the meaning of the

great war-vessels, belonging to the various nations of the earth, which patrol this coast, the ordinary inhabitant seems to have but scant notion of their significance.

The Turkish Government has a little rat of a boat, which in fair weather may worry its way from port to port along the Syrian coast, but which dare not venture out in a storm. As a general rule, it does not indulge in protracted voyages, because it is usually short of coal—some official having stolen the money which should go toward its equipment with this useful mineral.

A short time before we visited Syria a British war-vessel came into the Bay of Antioch, and cast anchor for the day. It was one of those huge marine monsters of the most modern type, able, single-handed, with a fraction of its tremendous armament, to blow off the surface of the water any navy that Turkey has ever possessed. It was followed into the Bay of Antioch by this insignificant runt of a Turkish steamer, the officers of which knew, of course, that the huge British ironclad was going to stay but a few hours in the bay, and then proceed to Beyrout. The Turkish captain came ashore at Suadiyeh, and told the principal personages there

that he had given the British captain commands to weigh anchor and get out of the Bay of Antioch before six o'clock that evening.

Sure enough, at five o'clock the war-ship hauled up her anchor and steamed majestically out of the bay, followed at a respectful distance by the tiny Turkish steamer. The inhabitants of the port watched the disappearing ship, and then saw their own turn about and return. It seems incredible that these people should actually believe that the ironclad was driven out by their miniature craft, which would have sunk if she had even fired one of her own worthless guns, yet such is the case. They had collected along the shore to witness the annihilation of the big vessel should she prove so daring as to remain in the bay after six o'clock. I said to an intelligent man, and a most successful merchant: 'What would have happened if the British vessel had remained in the bay until after six o'clock?'

'Oh,' he replied, with the earnestness of conviction, 'the British ship did well to leave, for the Sultan had ordered her utter destruction if she had not obeyed his commands. Praise be to Allah, the captain was wise, and left a full hour before the time he was

ordered away. We were all glad of that, for we wish no harm to the British.'

I was anxious to learn if my intelligent friend the quarantine officer believed this yarn, so I asked him if it were true that a Turkish war-vessel had actually driven a British ironclad out of the Bay of Antioch. He did not reply, but he smiled sweetly, and offered me a cigarette, although the twinkle in his eye said as plainly as words:

'What do *you* think?'

This same precious little Turkish gunboat was coming from Cyprus to Alexandretta when the coal gave out. The captain and one of the officers got into a small boat and came to Alexandretta for a barge of coal. The Turkish Government's credit does not seem to be extra good even in its own dominions. The man who possessed the coal refused to part with it unless on a cash basis. The captain stormed and threatened vengeance from Stamboul, but the coal-owner, who was a citizen of a foreign Power, proved immovable, and was not to be terrorized by the thunders of Constantinople. 'No cash, no coal,' was his motto.

The captain, finding him obdurate, made a collection among his officers, and offered this money to the

coal-merchant, saying he would pay the rest on a certain date. But carbon is valuable on the Syrian coast, and the merchant wouldn't trust the Government for one piastre; whereupon the captain got a big whip, went among the inhabitants of Alexandretta with it, and, by means of persuasion by the lash, collected enough funds to get his steamer into the port. And this is the boat which terrorizes all the navies of the world along the coast of Asia Minor!

Life would not be so very well worth living along these shores were it not for the American cruisers. The official Turk has a most salutary dread of these snow-white steamers. It is well that this is so, for in quite recent times American Consuls and Vice-Consuls have had a hard time of it.

When the Minister of any country is a close personal friend of the Sultan, the other citizens of that country in the outlying districts had better take to the woods. The idea seemed to have got abroad, among the kaimakams and other officials, that, while it was dangerous to meddle with an Englishman, they could do pretty much what they liked with an American. The cruisers, however, mitigated this belief, and also did things which failed to appear in the official despatches to the Government at

Washington. I don't know in what form the captain of a cruiser sends in his report, but perhaps it may take some such shape as this, in recounting an incident that actually occurred:

'The kaimakam of the port of Nix having thrown some obstacles in the way of the Rev. Mr. Blank, an American citizen, in relation to the school established at this place, the Rev. Mr. Blank made complaint to me through our Vice-Consul, I happening to be in the port for a few hours. When the kaimakam visited me I expostulated with him, and explained to him the right of domicile under which the Rev. Mr. Blank is allowed to prosecute his duties in this place. The kaimakam admitted that he had acted without due knowledge of the law, and gave me his assurance that the rights of the Rev. Mr. Blank would not again be infringed.'

This sort of communication might read very nicely in Washington, and could be filed away without doing anybody much harm. A little error had been committed by a Turkish official; his attention had been called to it, whereupon he expressed his regret, making instant amends. Now, what really happened was this: The kaimakam had made up his mind that the Rev. Mr. Blank was to be driven out of the port

of Nix by fair means or foul, and so the clergyman's life was made a hell on earth. He complained to the Vice-Consul, who reported the matter to his Minister at Constantinople, who returned a soothing answer, saying that perhaps the Rev. Mr. Blank had not been as tactful towards the officials as he should have been, and asking the Vice-Consul to smooth the matter out and not to make a fuss.

One peculiarity of a Turkish telegraph-office is that the Government officials always know the purport of a despatch before it reaches the person to whom it is sent, and this in spite of the proviso that an official telegram handed in by a Consul or Vice-consul should, by international arrangement, be delivered without delay. The kaimakam, learning of the polite rebuff from the Legation before the Vice-Consul himself had received the communication, thereupon proceeded to make it still more uncomfortable for the Rev. Mr. Blank, and the Vice-Consul, knowing how matters stood at Constantinople, was well aware that further appeals to headquarters would be useless. But American Vice-Consuls are ingenious men, acquainted with the fact that there exist other ways of killing a dog than by the butter-choking method.

The wink was tipped to the captain of a cruiser, whose name I omit, and that cruiser promptly dropped round to the port of Nix. The long-boat was lowered almost before the cruiser had stopped; a young naval officer, decked out in full uniform, landed with a formidable array of stalwart sailors, and commanded the kaimakam, with his chief underlings, to come aboard within the hour and have a little talk with the captain. As the cruiser was cleared for action, and as force is the only proposition a kaimakam understands, he came obsequiously on board with his following. The marines were drawn up armed in formidable array, and the trembling kaimakam was received by the stern captain in full uniform, standing with his hand resting on the muzzle of a quick-firing gun.

'Look here,' said the captain to the interpreter, 'tell this man that I don't talk Turkish worth a damn, but this thing does,' whereupon he fondly patted the barrel of the gun. 'If he doesn't promise instantly to treat fairly any citizen of the United States within his district, I'm here to shell his town.'

When this truculent message was translated to the agitated kaimakam, that official at once pros-

trated himself on the white boards of the cruiser's deck, beat his forehead against them, and swore by Allah and the Prophet that he would hereafter be the best friend the Rev. Mr. Blank ever had. And it is a fact that the Rev. Mr. Blank has been unmolested ever since; while it is another fact that the captain of the unmentioned cruiser greatly distinguished himself in the recent Spanish-American War—as, indeed, a man who could talk like that would be very apt to do.

Another American cruiser nipped in the bud a massacre which would doubtless have taken place had slow diplomatic methods been resorted to. There is an American who lives on the coast and carries on a large business. He and another are the only white men in the town. Their two families are the only English-speaking people for miles around. One day there came wailing down the mountain-road to the coast a terrified collection of children, some of them cut and bleeding. A massacre had taken place up among the mountains, and this was the remnant of it.

The American took these children into his compound, made beds for them in his sheds, and attended to the wounded as well as he could,

assisted by his family. The officials made a demand for the children; they would take care of them, they said, which statement was doubtless accurate—in a sense. The American refused to give them up, and the kaimakam appealed by telegraph to Stamboul. One or two of the children died that night, and next morning, luckily, an English steamer happened to call at the port. The captain, on hearing how things stood, came ashore himself with a body of his sailors and took the children on board.

The unfortunate waifs were placed in charge of an English charitable society in Syria, by which association they are probably taken care of to-day, their parents all being dead. The authorities of the place bitterly resented this rescue, and doubtless Constantinople was not too well pleased; for if massacres are to be accomplished, they should be done cleanly, because allowing fragments to escape in this way leads to these matters getting into the European papers and making trouble.

From his own Legation the American received an official censure for his conduct, and was told not to meddle with internal politics, which was exceedingly good advice. A week later, one of his most trusted employés entered his private office and said, with

tears and trembling, that the mountaineers who had committed the former up-country outrage were now hiding, all fully armed, in the mosque. There was a rumour current among the natives that after three days these brigands were to be turned loose upon the town, after which there would be no more interference with local politics.

The American knew that there was little use in telegraphing. The Turkish authorities would make ample apologies to the American Government, and doubtless pay compensation if an accident unfortunately occurred; but that would be of small advantage to a man who, with his family, had been obliterated from the face of the earth. He knew that an American cruiser was lying in a bay some miles away, and the question was, how to inform her captain of the crisis. The coast was guarded so closely that not even a small boat could get out unchallenged. The American had a skiff of his own, but every time he put out into the waters of the Mediterranean he had to get permission from the Turkish authorities.

Luckily, the nights were very dark, and as his compound reached down to the water's edge, his eldest son resolved to make an attempt to commu-

nicate with the cruiser. It happened to be a calm, still night, with a light breeze blowing off shore. Father and son, under cover of the darkness, shoved the craft afloat with as little noise as possible, and the young man crawled into it; he did not dare to hoist sail or move an oar, but was forced to content himself with lying still in the bottom of the boat until she drifted leisurely far out to sea.

Once free from the influence of the mountain range, the western breeze became stronger, and the young man cautiously raised his lateen sail. After that everything was straight going, until, shortly after midnight, he saw dimly ahead of him the great white bulk of the American cruiser, and a moment later was challenged by the watch on deck. 'I am so-and-so,' he shouted up from his little shell upon the face of the dark waters. 'Your commander knows my father. I must speak to the captain at once.'

A few moments later the captain was leaning over the bulwarks.

'What's the trouble, my boy?' he asked.

'There's going to be a massacre,' answered the boy, 'and father thinks it is directed against us. The mosque is full of armed savages from the

mountains, ready to be let loose on the town. Father knew there was no use in telegraphing, so I managed to slip away when darkness set in, and here I am. Can you come around with the cruiser?'

'You bet!' cried the captain emphatically. 'That's what we are here for. Get your boat alongside, and we'll hoist it on board.'

In an incredibly short time the banked fires were raked down and all aglow, and the cruiser, with lights masked, steamed swiftly and silently across the section of the Mediterranean that was before her.

The boy told me, with tears in his eyes, how his heart leaped when, from the prow of the cruiser, he saw two lights burning side by side in an upper window of his father's house—for this had been the prearranged signal. If everything was all right, two lights were to be burned; if the compound was attacked, one light only was to be shown—denoting that speed was necessary; if the house were in darkness, then they had been vanquished, and the cruiser had arrived too late.

'Now, my boy,' said the captain, as the cruiser, her engines stopped, moved with lessening speed into the bay, 'I'll blind the eyes of our friends the

Turks with my searchlight, while you steal up to the foot of your father's garden in your boat, and then the authorities will think we have just happened along.'

The first intimation the American family had of approaching help was the sudden dazzling white blaze of the searchlight enveloping their house; then it ranged the town from end to end, and illuminated the high mountains beyond.

'It was like the finger of God on the hills,' said the boy's mother to me.

While the boy slipped ashore in the darkness, the searchlight lit up the town, flashing here and there, a streaming banner of glory, bringing out the houses, towers, and minarets into relief as if it were a gigantic stereopticon. Finally it rested fair on the mosque and remained stationary there, as a gentle hint to the occupants that the captain knew precisely where the storm-centre was. The kaimakam and his subordinates shrugged their shoulders and knew that once more fate had intervened.

'The gods of the Christians have come,' they said resignedly.

In the gray day-dawn the mountaineers, grouped or singly, wended their way back into the moun-

tains. The gods of the Christians had indeed come, and nothing was to be gained by struggling against Kismet.

Along that terrible coast the English-speaking race stand shoulder to shoulder together, in spite of any differences that may be dividing their respective countries. An Englishman in trouble, and out of touch with his own consular service, never thinks of appealing to a Russian, French, or German Consul or captain, but always to an American official, if he is within the radius of such communication. In like manner, the American makes complaint to British authority.

Since the Greco-Turkish War, our prestige has undoubtedly fallen tremendously all over the Moslem world in the Near East. The Turkish officials themselves are beginning to believe that, if they bearded the old Lion of the West, they would receive enough help from other European nations to secure victory for the Crescent. This belief, culminating in the massacre of British soldiers in Crete, has doubtless had a set-back since the hanging of the Moslems implicated. Nevertheless, even at the lowest ebb of British prestige, a Turkish official thinks twice before interfering with a British Vice-Consul, not to

mention the higher diplomatic officers who represent the little island.

Britain is usually quick to respond to a complaint made by one of her servants, and the Turks, knowing this, are cautious. The American Vice-Consul, however, has sometimes not been so fortunate, especially when his Minister happened to be an intimate friend of the Sultan. When this is the case, there is trouble for American Consuls and Vice-Consuls along this turbulent coast.

In one particular spot the kaimakam had been exceedingly insulting to the American Vice-Consul, and the unfortunate man could get no redress. The wily kaimakam knew better than to interfere with the British Vice-Consul; nevertheless, there were some questions outstanding between them. But there was one thing the kaimakam had not counted upon, and this was the esteem and friendship in which the British Vice-Consul held his American *confrère*.

Suddenly the British Vice-Consul brought up one of these unsettled questions, received the usual evasive reply from the kaimakam, and at once telegraphed through the proper channels to England, saying that there was no doing anything with this

obstructive dignitary. Whereupon England at once communicated with Constantinople, and the kaimakam's official head came off before that astonished individual realized what had struck him. However, Constantinople made no secret of the fact that his degradation was due to the British Vice-Consul. All this surprised the kaimakam, because the question on which he fell was of no particular importance. It had been amicably discussed in the usual languid, Oriental way, often and often, without showing any signs of becoming acute. The kaimakam forthwith went to the British Vice-Consul, abased himself on the floor at his feet, asked what his servant had done to bring resentment upon him, and offered to settle everything in any way that would be pleasing to the Vice-Consul, if that official would but take angered England off his back. The British official said he would do his best, but mentioned incidentally that the American Vice-Consul was a great friend of his, who had had a bad time all on account of this same kaimakam.

The Turk was quick to see how the land lay, and at once promised that he would make the place a heaven on earth for the American Vice-Consul did reinstatement ensue; whereupon the British Vice-

Consul set the wires in motion again, said that the kaimakam had made ample amends, and that probably there would be less trouble with him in future than with a stranger. So the kaimakam got back his place of honour and profit, and the American Vice-Consul has had nothing to complain of since.

This is another of the incidents which do not appear in the archives of either country exactly as it took place; but, nevertheless, the action tended toward peace and quietness and goodwill in a remote section of the Turkish Empire.

The official Turk naturally dislikes all the numerous schools and schoolmasters which England and America have imposed upon him in various parts of the land of the Crescent. As a general rule, the local official Turk knows that he may harry missionaries and schoolmasters as much as he pleases, so long as no diplomatic complaints are made; but he has to walk gingerly, because he is well aware that if a protest ensues his official life may be shortened. The teachers who exile themselves far away from home and friends, in order to instruct the youth of Syria, are mostly devout, earnest persons, willing to sacrifice health and strength, or even life itself, if they can ameliorate in some measure the

hard lot of the poor people among whom they labour.

These teachers are the last persons to make complaint to their Consuls of any personal sufferings they may be called upon to endure—trusting rather to the mercy of Providence than depending upon the strength of their country—and it is only when they see brutal fanaticism destroying the result of their work or nullifying their efforts that they reluctantly make an appeal to international law. This is a patient frame of mind that the official Turk never seems capable of distinguishing from cowardice and a sense of protection lacking. And so, to his after-regret, he often interferes where sad experience teaches him he had no right to intermeddle.

Most frequently the teacher or missionary does not complain, but some friend who knows the circumstances says a word in the right quarter, and then the Turkish official wishes he had let well enough alone. The most interesting instance of this kind that came to my knowledge, during my sojourn along the coast, was the case of a mild little old English lady, who for years has kept a bit of a school on her own account in one of the towns of Syria. She is unconnected with any of the large

missions, educational or religious, but keeps on in her own unobtrusive way, paying all the expenses incurred by her scheme of philanthropy, for she is rich, and belongs to an ancient family in England. The Turks know that she has little communication with any of the English or American colonies. She is as innocent, and seems as helpless, as one of the doves that flutter about Jerusalem, and naturally the local Jack-in-office sees no reason why he should not harry her.

But whatever powerful relatives may think of her wisdom in immolating herself among the extreme poor of Syria, when she might be enjoying wealth and an ancestral home in England, they do not lose sight of her, and, unknown to herself, a friendly eye keeps guard. She manages a sort of kindergarten for very young children, all of whom are devoted to her—as are their parents, if they but dared to give expression to their feelings. She lives among them, visits the sick, succours the penniless, and has done so for years. The official Turk views all this with suspicious eyes; he knows sedition lurks somewhere in such an objectless life. He demands backsheesh upon occasion, and the celerity with which she uncomplainingly complies, confirms his distrust and

strengthens his belief that there is some deep design underneath all her conduct. Then, not knowing the fate of his predecessor—for Turkish power from Stamboul strikes like lightning and gives no reason—he suddenly turns the troops on her. They break up the school, and often the furniture as well, scatter the frightened pupils, threaten the parents, and the old woman sits disconsolate among the ruins of her hopes. Her only weapon is prayer; her only trust is in the eternal justice of God—and to that alone she appeals.

She prays that the hearts of the authorities may be softened. She is like a motherly old hen whose chicks have been scattered by the down-swoop of a fierce hawk. But under the sea and over the land there is flashing on the wings of electricity a cabalistic word. The devout little lady has a relative high in authority in the British Government. A stern despatch goes to Constantinople, demanding reparation and explanation immediate and complete. I can picture the official on the Bosphorus throwing up his hands in despair, crying, 'Allah and the Prophet! Why can't they leave the old woman alone? The British fleet will be mobilized next, through the stupidity of that kaimakam!'

Then from Stamboul—for the Turk knows nothing of the Western appellation, Constantinople—descends the whip-lash of despotic fury across the face of the amazed kaimakam. When the stricken magistrate recovers his scattered senses, he goes to his blameless victim and abases himself—grovels and pleads with her to forgive him. He and his assistants put the schoolroom to rights once more, and gather the children together as if they were the most precious of jewels. Curiously enough, if a Turkish functionary could by any possibility tell the truth, he might perhaps help himself; but he thinks she knows all about it, and is now convinced that she is even more crafty than he at first suspected; and so he wishes to curry favour by pretending that he is making restitution on his own account, and not through terror; while she, good lady! understands nothing of his official jeopardy, and merely sees in his action the working of a contrite heart, awakened, through her prayers, to a sense of justice and mercy.

I am pleased to say that for some years past the little old lady has not been molested, and it is supposed that each succeeding official gets the straight tip that this apparently insignificant morsel of humanity is more dangerous than as much dyna-

mite. I saw her moving about, serene and unscathed, in slums that a brave man would scarcely venture through alone, the blessed light of Christian benevolence toward all mankind beaming from her angelic wrinkled face, demure as a nun and as unheeding of peril; but the onlooker, knowing all the circumstances, might well imagine stalking gigantic behind her the protecting personification of her justice-loving Land, saying to Tyranny, 'Touch her who dares! She is mine!'

Chapter XVII

Loading Oranges at Sidon—The London of Ancient Days—A Town of Mosques—Jaffa and Napoleon—A Disastrous Pilgrimage—An American Locomotive pulls Pilgrims to Jerusalem—The glib Guides to the Holy Land.

It was a beautiful evening when we dropped anchor in the harbour of Sidon. We were to take in a quantity of oranges here, and fill up the remaining space with the same fruit at Jaffa. The loaded orange-barges were waiting for us, and even before the anchor was let go they came racing toward us. I wonder why, before I visited this region, I had imbibed the notion that the labouring man of the East was lazy. I never before saw such energy displayed by any body of men, or work carried on with greater fury or more hullabaloo. One might have thought that the Day of Judgment had been announced, and that these people were anxious to get things cleared

up before the trumpet sounded. The eddies from the screw had not ceased swirling, when a dozen orange-laden barges were alongside, fighting for first place. Then, as the huge piles of orange-boxes were swung round over the hatchway and lowered into the black hold, the contrast between the calm, deliberate English crew and the wild, vociferating, jabbering natives in the barges was most striking. The British tar looked with a cool contempt on these brown, bare-legged, gesticulating human windmills, who scrambled like monkeys up to the deck, hanging on by any rope or chain that gave a hold for their hands. The serene and collected watchman did not explain to the natives that they had no right on deck—he took it for granted they knew that, which it is quite possible they did; so when a head appeared above the gunwale, a sailor with great deliberation would place a powerful hand against the intruder's breast, and hurl him down on top of his orange-boxes again, or with a plump and scream into the water. All were shrieking simultaneous appeals to the captain, complaining of their treatment, or protesting that their boats had been shoved out of place; but the captain was used to this sort of thing, and paid no attention to it. As soon

as a barge was empty, it fought its way out from among the others that were all struggling for its abandoned position, language being used incessantly that was, doubtless, quite as bad as it sounded, for these barefooted pirates are proficient in profanity.

Sidon, from the ship's deck, was as lovely a place as could well be imagined; and if it were not so far away from any civilized country it would be an ideal winter resort. Northward stretched a broad beach of firm yellow sand, bordered on the land side by luxuriant tropical vegetation, and washed on the other by the gentle blue waves of the Mediterranean. This stretch of sand seemed to be part of the coast highway, for laden camels stalked slowly and with dignified strides toward, or from, the ancient city. Behind the white houses of the town of Sidon rose, in gentle slopes, the green hills. In the immediate foreground, crowning the promontory of an artificial peninsula, stood a huge ruined castle, partially destroyed, I was told, by British cannon, and never since repaired by the Turks, although a Turkish garrison inhabited the dilapidated shell. A broken stone causeway leads from it to the town. Another stretch of sand runs along the front of the ancient town itself, and here, in the shallow water,

the flat-bottomed barges are run ashore and loaded with orange-boxes. It is hard to believe that this little town once ruled the world, before London was thought of; and that the grounds on which the former metropolis stood are now occupied by luxuriant fruit-gardens, growing oranges and lemons, to the sale of which the townspeople owe their subsistence. One thing is certain, that when London withdraws from the business of being a city, oranges cannot be raised on its site, although the inhabitants may be able to do something in cabbage or turnips. Sidon was the capital of Phœnicia, and the Phœnicians were the English of the East in early times—great business people, great navigators, great merchants, and great colonizers. At this spot glass is supposed to have been invented or discovered. Some Phœnician merchants, it is said, camping out on these very sands which fringe the northward coast, made fires between blocks of nitron, and thus the carbonate of soda, fused by heat with the sand on which it rested, formed glass, and for centuries Sidon was the chief centre of the glass industry. Men from Sidon began the mining for tin in Cornwall, and so it will be seen that Sidonians went far afield, as it was considered in those days, in quest of that cash for which people

are still searching. Here weights and measures were inaugurated, and Sidon is supposed to have sent out the alphabet into the world, thereby making trouble for the younger generation of all countries, and rendering possible such sterling works of useful information as the present volume. Therefore, we have much to bless and curse Sidon for. Sidon had a King of its own, and it was also the first republic. The town has seen many a hard fight, and has been taken and retaken times without number, fighting sometimes with its neighbour Tyre, and often with outsiders. Sidon had also the greatest fleet of ancient times, and this constitutes another likeness to Great Britain. If the country had been true to its ships, it might perhaps have existed in its full strength to-day; but the Phœnicians foolishly dismissed their fleet, which gave Alexander the command of the sea, and led to the downfall of Tyre, whereby eight thousand of its inhabitants were put to the sword and thirty thousand sold as slaves. Britons sing that they absolutely refuse to become slaves, therefore they should take warning from Tyre and Sidon, and maintain their fleet: for if they ignore this pertinent lesson, then indeed will come true in sterner sense the words

of the poet, and all our pomp of yesterday will be one with Nineveh and Tyre.

Distance lends enchantment to the view of Sidon, and when once the traveller has entered its narrow streets, the illusion of beauty is gone. Here, more than in any other place I visited, does one get the full benefit of the calls to prayer. The town is so small, and the mosques are so numerous, that one hears the callers all at the same time, pacing as they do around the circular balconies of the high minarets, each trying to outsing the other. These heavenly criers break out simultaneously with a suddenness that startles the unaccustomed tourist, who thinks for a moment that something has gone wrong with the upper works of the city, or that a great fire has broken out, whereas it is merely a sort of insurance against fire in the future.

It was just daylight when the engines of the steamer ceased working opposite the well-known and justly celebrated town of Jaffa, and very striking the city looked, with its houses apparently piled up on the precipice that faces the sea, the town itself dark, and only the outline of it in sharp relief against the orange and crimsoning sky to the east, where the sun was shortly to rise. A low line of black

rock, like a fierce and jagged set of teeth, over which the foamy waves were snarling, fronts the entire length of the town, leaving a patch of still water between the reef and the shore, communicating with the outer sea by one narrow, dangerous passage. Here, as at Sidon, the orange-barges clustered turbulently around us, even before the ship had stopped, trying hard to throw ropes aboard that would catch on something and draw the craft alongside of the slowing ship. Here, too, came to the gangway the lengthy passenger boats of the tourist agencies, seemingly overmanned with ten or a dozen rowers. This meant Jerusalem, and a keen competition for our custom. I had no idea there were so many tourist agencies in existence as now professed themselves, through their representatives, ready to guide us speedily and well over whatever section of the Holy Land we desired to visit. For protection against the others, I put myself into the hands of Rollo Floyd, and afterwards found no cause to regret it.

Mr. Floyd is an American, and his interesting career is a striking example of the genius of that great people. The average American has an open mind regarding almost every subject. The big

country, having cut itself loose from the traditions of the Old World more than a century ago, refuses to be hampered by them, and consequently is ready to try all new things. The American mind, being the most inventive that is at present on earth, has given us many of those labour-saving machines which are the wonder of our modern era—the telegraph, the telephone, with various other applications of electricity, the fast printing-press, the typewriter, the phonograph, the air-brake, and all that sort of thing. This genius naturally tails off into perpetual-motion machines, Keely motors, and various fads, which are more convenient as a foundation for sensational newspaper articles than for any useful purpose in the work of the world. Perhaps the clearness and stimulating qualities of the air in the United States has something to do with the extra fertility of the brain, and then this open-mindedness on the part of the average citizen, of which I have spoken, offers a fertile field for the implanting of any novel suggestion. When the inventive brain of America disdains anything so material as machinery, it turns naturally toward the constructing of religions. I suppose there are more religions invented in America in a year than exist in all other parts of the world put

together. Many of these religions are mere flashes in the pan, and, having only a limited number of followers, die a natural death; others stick and flourish. While the broad East is content with one or two religions, the broad West numbers hers by hundreds. Thus we have Mormonism, Spiritualism, Shakerism, and dozens of other 'isms,' ending with the most deadly of all, Christian Science; and the latter, being utterly incomprehensible to any sane mind, claims to number adherents to the extent of one or two millions.

Mr. Rollo Floyd is in Palestine to-day, because in his youth he fell a victim to one of the numerous ephemeral religious inventions. In cold and stony Maine, of all places in the world, the interesting belief took root that Christ was about to return to the Holy Land, and that it was necessary for those who desired salvation to be on this classic ground in order to meet their Redeemer. This was thirty or forty years ago, and enough devotees were got together to equip for themselves and their families a sailing ship. They took pine lumber with them in the hold of the brig, for the building of houses after the American plan. The United States Consul, who was supposed to have made preparations for their

reception, was a Jew. One might have imagined that it would occur to neighbours of Artemus Ward, who was then in the height of his fame, that there was something humorous, or at least incongruous, in a Jew being expected to make satisfactory arrangements for the reception of Christian pilgrims about to wait the second coming of a Messiah in whom the Jews did not believe, and that, too, under the dominion of the Turk, who despised both Jew and Christian. The result was most unsatisfactory to the pilgrims, although it is hinted that the Jew emerged from his position with some augmentation of his thrifty bank account. The strangers were not allowed to enter Jaffa, but were compelled to camp out on the sands of the seashore, where many died from exposure and want. I believe that Secretary Seward sent a ship to take back the remnant to the United States. Some, however, remained in Jaffa, of whom Rollo Floyd is the last survivor, and their wooden houses are still to be seen, looking like the cottages of an American village, and seeming strangely out of place in that ancient Biblical city.

Jaffa has been a town for so many centuries that it possesses many names. A tourist is made happy by the fact that he may call it almost anything, and

still be reasonably right. It is termed Yafa, Jaffa, or Joppa, and various other things. The name Jaffa is said to signify 'the beautiful,' and is also alleged to have been derived from Japhet, the son of Noah; but as Jaffa is supposed to have been a city long before the Flood, there must be a mistake somewhere in attributing the name to Japhet. Being so old, many things have happened here. The classic tale of Andromeda and the Dragon finds its location on the rocks in front of Jaffa. Here Perseus rescued her, turning the Dragon to stone by exhibiting to him the snake-encircled head of the Medusa; and Perseus was not the first man to play one woman off against another. Down to three hundred years ago, chains and an iron ring attached to these rocks were shown in corroboration of this story; but some thrifty native has sold them for old iron, and now the unassisted tourist has some difficulty in crediting the legend. However, there are chains and an anchor on these rocks belonging to a recently-wrecked French steamer, so perhaps in time this hardware will re-embellish the fable.

It was to this port that Hiram, King of Tyre, sent his rafts of timber from the forests of Lebanon, to help build Solomon's Temple; from here, Jonah

started on his disastrous voyage; and at the house of Simon the tanner, Peter saw the great sheet filled with animals let down from heaven. On the sand-hills near the shore is pointed out the spot where Napoleon massacred in cold blood from two thousand to four thousand Turkish and Albanian troops who had surrendered as prisoners of war; and in the Armenian monastery, through which the stranger is led, it is asserted that he poisoned a number of his own soldiers who were suffering from the plague.

The railway from Jaffa to Jerusalem is not as picturesque as the one from Beyrout to Damascus; still, there is some arid rocky scenery toward the Jerusalem end of the line which is well worth seeing. At the Jaffa railway-station the toot of the locomotive had a hoarse, familiar sound to me, and, on going forward to investigate, I found that the engine was an old Baldwin locomotive made in Philadelphia, with a deep roaring whistle, very different from the shrill scream of an English or Continental engine. The locomotives on this line were made in America for the Panama Canal, and after being abandoned they were finally transported to Palestine, to end their days in hauling people

from Jaffa to Jerusalem, and *vice versâ*. The opening of the railway has conventionalized the entrance to the Holy City, but nevertheless the line is a boon to those who are pressed for time. The railway-station at Jerusalem looks something like a station at a rural village in France, as indeed it well may, for I understand the railway is owned by a French company. Outside the Jerusalem terminus stands collected the most ramshackle conglomeration of vehicles to be seen anywhere in the world. The cabs look as if they had done service in half a dozen different cities, going from bad to worse, and finally, having been cast off as useless, they turn up at Jerusalem. The horses are meagre scarecrows, and for some reason or other the drivers lash these unfortunate animals to the highest speed of which they are capable, dash down the steep hill and across the viaduct that forms a dam to a large pond, then up the slope at a gallop to the Jaffa gate. One would think the animals could not have life or strength enough to make such an attempt, but probably if it were not for the headlong plunge down the hill the momentum would be lacking to ascend the opposite inclined plane. Jerusalem is popularly supposed to be owned by the Turks, but

it really belongs to the tourist agencies, and there are so many of them that competition is exceedingly bitter. To realize the possibilities of language, so far as invective is concerned, one must hear one Jerusalem guide give his opinion of another. Their verbiage is largely interspersed by quotations from Scripture, for the Jerusalem guide has the Bible at his tongue's end, and rarely gets through a sentence without an extract from Holy Writ. 'That,' he exclaims, pointing to a lone bit of timber perhaps a century old, 'is the tree on which Judas Iscariot hanged himself. See Matt. xxvii. 5.'

And so it goes with everything exhibited. Sometimes there is a string of quotations as long as your arm, all glibly reeled off with the speed of a boy saying his multiplication table. At Jaffa we had been burdened with cards giving the merits of this man or that, as dragoman to the Holy City. Lavish and laudatory testimonials were printed on these leaflets, and before I reached Jerusalem I had a fair working knowledge of the claims to preference of each individual. Many of the guides themselves boarded the train at intermediate stations, coming down from Jerusalem and lying in wait for us. When Smith volubly approached me and asked to

be engaged during my stay in Jerusalem, I told him I had some thought of retaining Brown.

'Brown!' cried Smith, with ineffable contempt in gesture and tone. 'Brown! he is no guide; he doesn't know more than a hundred and twenty-seven texts from Scripture, and he has most of them wrong.'

The Swiss guides have contests among themselves to determine which is possessed of the greatest endurance in rock-climbing or snow-travelling; but the Jerusalem guides, Smith informs me, have contests on the texts from the Old and New Testaments, resembling the spelling-matches of our youth. The guides stand in a row and give chapter and verse, with the words pertaining thereto. A man sits down when his stock is exhausted, and thus the fierce combat goes on until only one remains on his feet. This survivor is declared the winner. Smith had testimonials to show that he had taken more prizes than any other guide; but, then, so had Brown when he submitted his merits to my consideration, and he laughed to scorn Smith's assertion that he could recite the New Testament from beginning to end.

Chapter XVIII

Jerusalem the Golden—The Sacred City of Three Nationalities — The Mosque of Omar — The Holy Sepulchre — The Mountain of Light—Lovely Bethlehem—A Strange Fraternity—What are the Wild Waves saying at Jaffa?

JERUSALEM is remarkable in that it is not only the Holy City of the Christians and the Holy City of the Jews, but also one of the holy cities of the Moslems, ranking next to Mecca and Medina; so it may well be termed the capital of the religious world.

We were first taken to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, a bewildering place at the hour we visited it, for half a dozen religious sects were simultaneously engaged in their devotions in the different portions of the building allotted to them; the Greek Church having the largest and most cathedral-like chapel, while the Coptic Church worshipped noisily in a

little cave, the rocky walls of which were barely high enough to allow a man to stand upright when he entered. The Holy Sepulchre itself is down in a little cramped cellar reached by stooping and squeezing through a narrow entrance that is scarcely wide enough for two to pass each other. It is a wonder that the pilgrims venturing therein are not suffocated, for the place is always packed full, is practically without ventilation, and has innumerable candles burning. A woman fainted while I was there, either through excess of religious emotion or because of the vitiated air, and it was with the utmost difficulty that she could be removed before being trampled to death.

The Protestant Church seems not to be recognised by the authorities, and there is no Protestant chapel near the Holy Sepulchre. By the entrance to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, on mats, sit cross-legged the Turkish guards, with their guns over their knees. They remain there dark, impassive, and motionless, until a row begins. It would be interesting to know what their opinions are regarding this turmoil of sect which they are there to quell whenever it passes bounds that lead to a breach of the peace. Sometimes a free fight

occurs, leading to loss of life; and many morals have been drawn, not to the advantage of the Christian, from the fact that the Mohammedan has but one God and one Prophet, wherever the names of Allah and of Mohammed are revered. It is a mistake, however, to suppose that there are not divisions among the Mohammedans as among the Christians, and in pilgrimages to Mecca these sects are often at variance, arguing the matter out with spear, dagger, or musket. So it is doubtful if the Mohammedan has any advantage over the Christian in the matter of divergence of view.

From the Holy Place of the Christians we went to the Holy Place of the Moslems, the celebrated Mosque of Omar, supposed to stand on the site of Solomon's temple. It is entered through a long dark tunnel, like a suggestion of the underground railway. Visitors must be accompanied by a kavass from their Legation, and the kavass adds solemnity and dignity to the party. He is usually a tall stately man, garbed wonderfully, displaying on the back of his garment, in gorgeous embroidery, the arms of the country he represents. He wears a formidable half-moon sword, and is all in all an impressive-looking personage. He expects five francs for his

trouble, and stalks silently beside the party—an ornamental rather than a useful appendage of the excursion.

It is not many years since no Christian foot was allowed to enter the sacred precincts of the celebrated mosque; it was death to trespass. But now these relics of barbarism are becoming fewer and fewer on the face of the earth, thanks to the Circular Tickets, personally conducted parties, and the unlimited desire for backsheesh, which affects alike followers of the Cross and followers of the Crescent. Gold seems to be the one god who receives universal, undivided devotion from all humanity. The stone-paved grounds of the mosque are very extensive, but the mosque itself appears small until you have entered it. At the door the visitor must put on over his boots coarse slippers of sacking, so that the sacredness of the spot may not be desecrated by alien foot. The party has a grotesque appearance as it shuffles along with these sacks tied round the heels. Every now and then a clumsy bundle slips off, and the unfortunate tourist hops about on one foot, fearful of consequences should he place the sole of his boot on the floor. But nothing particular happens if this is expertly done, for the good-natured

custodian of the mosque is always at hand to readjust the sack and accept a fee for doing so. He does not appear in the least disturbed by any desecration that may have taken place. In fact, he is a humorous individual who evidently has no bigoted belief in the sanctity of the mosque. He laughed heartily when he pounded his fists against the walls of the cave beneath, so that the hollow sound produced by the blows might convince us that the great rock under the dome was actually suspended between heaven and earth, as he alleged. I asked why they didn't take the wall away and allow people to walk underneath the rock, as that would be more convincing in a sceptical age than even the sound of his hollow blows. He smiled, and there was a suspicion of a wink, as he said that the labyrinth beneath the stone was so interminable that if people were allowed in, they would inevitably get lost. I imagine that it is this rock that gives the foundation for the legend about Mohammed's coffin hovering between earth and sky. The coffin rests securely at Medina, and this rock beneath the dome of the Mosque of Omar is, so far as I know, the only material article in the Moslem world that is suspended in the air like a huge balloon. The legend

of the sacred stone is, that Mohammed was praying here when he was translated to heaven. Such a whirlwind did he cause in his ascent that the stone followed him, and the Archangel Michael, seeing that the world was about to lose this holy rock, dropped from heaven and stayed its progress by pressing his three fingers on it. The indentations made by his fingers are shown to believer and unbeliever alike.

But even this hallowed spot was not allowed to the Moslems by the ubiquitous text-quoting guide. The custodian of the mosque could not understand English, so the guide was quite safe in saying to us:

'That's what *they* think, but *we* know better; read Genesis xx., first to nineteenth. This stone is really Mount Moriah, on the top of which Abraham was about to sacrifice his son.'

And so he quoted verse after verse in corroboration of his statement. Beside the railing round this gigantic stone is a slab of jasper into which Mohammed drove nineteen golden nails, one of which falls out at the close of each epoch; and when the whole nineteen are gone, will come the end of the world. Only three and a half are left, so the conclusion of all things must be much nearer than most people suppose.

The custodian of the mosque told us that the only way by which a Christian could reach heaven was to place money on each one of these golden nails. This being done by all of our party, as a sort of insurance payment, the custodian picked up the coins and put them in his pocket, giving us a collective wink. I have doubts of that Moslem's orthodoxy.

The large Mosque of El-Aksa has little of the beauty which distinguishes Omar; it looks like a warehouse rather than a sacred temple. It was built as a Christian church by the Emperor Justinian, and converted to Moslem usage by the Kalif Omar. On its floor lie a great number of new carpets, sent over as a present by the Sultan of Turkey; which seems to indicate that His Majesty is short of money, or that the carpet trade has fallen off tremendously in these later years. The rugs are coarse and crudely coloured; not to be compared with the ancient carpets we saw in other mosques from Cairo to Jerusalem.

Under this mosque are cellars of vast extent, forests of gigantic white pillars supporting the roof. These cellars are called King Solomon's stables, and the Saracens have used them for the housing of horses since Solomon's time. The Arabs hold that

these pillars were built by genii, whom Solomon compelled to labour for him. Up above, on a level with the Mosque of Omar, is the site of Solomon's throne, where he sat and watched his demon workers. It is said that, finding himself dying, and the task still unfinished, he propped himself up with his cane in this seat, and so died, the workers not suspecting that their release was due because of his demise. Not until the worms had eaten through the staff, so that the body fell forward, did they realize that their task-master was dead. Over the site of King Solomon's chair a canopy has been erected; it may be regarded as a memorial to the antiquity of the truth that capital has usually managed to outwit labour.

We quit the sacred precincts of the mosque by a gate on the side facing the Mount of Olives. Here we bade good-bye to our picturesque and decorative kavass, and mounted the donkeys provided for us to make an excursion across the Valley of Jehoshaphat, through the village of Bethany, and so up the Mount of Olives, ascending its eastern slope. The title of the mountain is no misnomer, for olives flourish there now as abundantly as of old.

Russia has captured the Mount of Olives as com-

pletely as she has annexed Port Arthur, having built upon the hallowed hill a Greek church, two hospices, and a very tall, extremely ugly tower, such as might be erected at some purely commercial international exhibition from which all art had been banished. The top is reached by a winding staircase of iron.

The Arabs call the Mount of Olives the Mountain of Light, because the sun rising behind it, as seen from Jerusalem, causes the mountain to glow with the wonderful tints of an Eastern sunrise. The view from the Mount of Olives is certainly one of the most striking that the traveller can meet anywhere. To the west, over a wild hilly country, are seen the rugged banks of Jordan, although no glimpse is to be had of the river itself; farther south is the blue disc of the Dead Sea—and in this arid land the mere sight of water is a delicious pleasure to the eye. Beyond the Dead Sea rise the mountains of Moab, marvellous in colour. Turning to the east, the immediate foreground is taken up by the walled city of Jerusalem spread out like a relief map.

Journeying down the Mount of Olives, we come to the Garden of Gethsemane, enclosed by an iron fence as modern as the Eiffel Tower and as ugly as the Forth Bridge.

After all, the Turk is a patient man. Anything more ridiculous in this sublime locality than a party of tourists in modern dress, mounted on ridiculous little donkeys that show an inclination, every now and then, to run away—while the traveller, unaccustomed to such exercise, holds on with much tugging and many shouts, and acts like a Cockney at the sea-side—can hardly be imagined. That the Turk does not rise and slaughter the whole aggregation speaks much for his long-suffering, if not for his judgment.

Coming round the city up to the Jaffa gate, we were overtaken by a clattering troop of Arab horsemen; and ragged though the men were, the contrast we presented to them, jogging along arrayed in London tailoring on our inadequate donkeys, was painfully unflattering to us. The Arabs, seated superbly on their splendid horses, their robes fluttering picturesquely in the wind, their long ornamented carabines slung over their shoulders, with the fierce but noble expression of their dark countenances, made a notable picture of grace of bearing and poetry of motion. They were doubtless a gang of thieves, but none the less well worth looking at.

The road from Bethlehem to Jerusalem is probably the worst that exists on the face of this earth.

Nowhere else is an honest contractor with a steam-roller needed so badly. The thoroughfare is one continued mass of broken stone, somebody having stolen the money that was allotted for the finishing of the road-bed. The Turkish contractor thinks there is little use in levelling a road himself when carriages are compelled to pass over it which will ultimately accomplish that task. The journey in a carriage takes an hour and a half, and never in a similar time have I heard so many quotations from the Bible. We were on an historic thoroughfare, every foot of which has its record in Holy Writ. The Bible, after all, is still the best guide to Palestine.

The village of Bethlehem is most beautifully situated, crescent-shaped, on the brow of the hill, looking across a vast, undulating country, constantly lowering until it reaches the Dead Sea, and then abruptly rising in the mountains of Moab. Near the northern end of Bethlehem is situated David's Well, about which there is a beautiful story in 2 Sam. xxiii. 14-17. (See how quickly one falls into the habits of a Jerusalem guide!) The environs of the well were closed when we arrived at the gate, but a woman, living in the dwelling adjoining, invited

us to go to the housetop and peer over the enclosure at it, and, owing to this kind offer, we obtained an interior glimpse of a Palestine residence.

Passing through a scantily furnished room, that served as kitchen, dining-, and living-room, we came out into a courtyard, and mounted a flight of steps that led to the roof, which was flat and surrounded by a parapet. It was easy to understand why the housetop was a favourite resting-place in ancient times, as it is to-day, for here one enjoys to its fullest extent the cool evening air after a hot day.

There wasn't much to see about David's Well, but we sat on the parapet and gazed abroad with delight at the charming village of Bethlehem and the chromatic mountains beyond. The five thousand inhabitants of Bethlehem are nearly all Christian, and are much superior as a class to the populace of other villages we had visited. Many of the women are strikingly beautiful. It is said that these people are descended from the Crusaders, who once rebuilt Bethlehem, although, like almost every other place in the East, it has been destroyed again and again, the present town being essentially modern. A number of Crusaders, it is alleged, becoming tired of crusading, which must have been at times a dis-

appointing profession, settled down in this beautiful spot, marrying Syrian or Saracenic women. The Cave, one of the many used as a stable in ancient days, as, indeed, underground chambers are similarly employed at the present time, presents to the stranger much the same appearance that the interior of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre does—a subterranean maze with a glare of lamps and numerous candles. The site in this instance, however, is considered more authentic than that at Jerusalem. Indeed, General Gordon held that the Golgotha is situated south of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, outside the walls of Jerusalem, beyond the Damascus Gate; and the shape of the hill he has pointed out certainly resembles the skull of an animal, and is generally known in Jerusalem as 'Gordon's Golgotha.' As it is entirely unoccupied by any sacred edifice, there is thus an opportunity for some enthusiast, like the Emperor William, to erect on this spot a church, whose title to authenticity will be, at least, equal to that of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. A huge cathedral might be constructed whose eastern end would include this Golgotha, the rock forming what might be termed a natural altar; the great church to be entirely unlighted save by one gigantic

window in the wall facing the rising sun, this window to contain a picture, in stained glass, of the Crucifixion. As the pilgrim entered the western door and saw the dark and gloomy skull-rock in the foreground, with the glorified representation of the tragedy illumined by the early splendour of an Oriental sunrise, the effect could scarcely fail to be most impressive.

Returning to the city, we went, by the invitation of Mr. Floyd, to visit one of the many communities which exist in and around Jerusalem. Going out by the Damascus Gate, we came to a great excavation known as the Tombs of the Kings. Descending a broad flight of steps, which led to a black pool of water, we turned to the left, and, passing under a beautifully sculptured lintel, we saw the entrance to the Tombs, which was so low that a man had to stoop on hands and knees before going in, after which he found himself in a spacious chamber, hewn out of the solid rock. But what struck me as most curious and explanatory was the stone which covered the low mouth of this enormous tomb; it was shaped like an exaggerated grindstone, perfectly round, and perhaps six inches thick. This circular granite disc ran backward and forward in a niche cut for its

reception; its runway was so smooth, and the stone itself was so perfectly rounded, that a man of moderate strength could roll it backward and forward, closing the entrance to the tomb or leaving it open at will. When I was a boy at Sunday-school, and read of the rolling away of the stone from the Saviour's tomb, I imagined, as probably most other people have done, that the stone was an immense boulder which stopped the entrance to a cave. Here, however, was a true explanation, and at once the text became clear to my mind as it had never before been.

Passing outward from these Tombs of the Kings, we arrived at a large square building, which is the home of a community known in Jerusalem as 'The Americans,' although it now contains people of various nationalities. The house surrounds a fine courtyard, in the centre of which flows a fountain, and about the fountain grows a mass of luxuriant tropical foliage. We were ushered into a spacious apartment, in which about thirty or forty people, men and women, were assembled, all enjoying a good talk and afternoon tea. I don't think I quite understood the *modus operandi* of this community, but the company was certainly a very pleasant one.

The objects of the members appear to include a scheme of helpfulness to needy outsiders for which no charge is made; and this bewilders me regarding the financial aspect of the combination, for if there is no income I should look for ultimate disaster. Many rich people have joined, and, as one law of the society is that all a neophyte's wealth belongs to the community, its existence may be guaranteed while the cash thus obtained holds out; but if the supply of wealthy adherents fail, then I cannot see where the community's revenue is to come from. Many of the ladies employ themselves in teaching schools, which are entirely free to the pupils. The members are celibates, and do not believe in marriage or giving in marriage. But whatever may be the ultimate outcome of the community, whether or not the devotees succeed in establishing a heaven on earth, as is their aspiration, they certainly form a very pleasant and happy family.

When we arrived at Jaffa, the rain was pouring in torrents, and there was a wild sea on. The waves were dashing over the Andromeda rock in a most disquieting manner, especially so to a man who saw his ship riding at anchor half a mile or more beyond. The boat in which I took passage was manned by about a

dozen stalwart rowers, and we set out in the teeth of the gale, all the crew singing monotonously. I asked the dragoman what their song was, and he replied that it was not a song at all, but a calling on the Prophet to come to their aid. And indeed it seemed that we should need any outside help that might be had for the asking. The men pulled the boat through the water at a great rate of speed, until we came to the opening in the rock, and here the passage is so narrow that they had to ship their oars, and trust to the momentum of the craft to carry her through. It certainly looked like a most perilous situation, for we met a huge green wave just at the mouth of the cut, and for a moment I thought nothing could save the boat from being dashed to pieces on the rocks. However, we surmounted the wave, and I had the pleasure of sitting in the stern and gazing up to the sky, wondering why the twelve men holding the oars did not drop down on me, while the next instant I was up in the sky gazing down at them ; and so we sped over the other side of the wave, where the oars could be placed once more in the water. We got clear of the rock, but now caught the full force of the billows, coming the whole length of the Mediterranean. The rowers called more and more loudly on

their saint, but I was pleased to notice that they never relaxed their own efforts. Flinging forward their long oars, they sprang up with bare feet on the edge of the seat before them, and threw backward their whole weight into their work. Half-way between the shore and the ship I began to give up all hope, but the dragoman encouraged me by saying that he had never lost a life, while the other tourist agencies had, on various occasions, sacrificed thirty or forty. This was cheerful, but it seemed to me that the chances were that his turn was now coming. However, we got safely to the steamer, after what I consider one of the most awful voyages I have ever undertaken. I shook hands with the captain on the deck, and he said, casting his eye around the horizon:

'I was afraid for a time we were going to have a storm, which is a very nasty thing on this coast, but, thank goodness, it hasn't come on, and here you are safe and sound on board again.'

'You call that a smooth passage, then?' I asked, with some hesitation.

'Oh, yes,' he answered—'smooth for Jaffa.'

Now that we were all aboard once more, and the steamer was full to repletion of fruit, she turned her

prow toward England; gave us a glimpse of the snow mountains of Crete, cool on top, but (politically) hot all around the edges at that particular moment; dropped into Malta to coal; slipped past Gibraltar in the night again, and so came safely to Liverpool, where we auctioned off our oranges for the Christmas market.

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